



The STORY *of a* ROUND HOUSE
▲ JOHN MASEFIELD ▲



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THE STORY OF A ROUND-HOUSE
AND OTHER POEMS



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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✓
THE STORY OF
A ROUND-HOUSE AND
OTHER POEMS

BY

JOHN MASEFIELD ✓

✓
AUTHOR OF "THE EVERLASTING MERCY"
"THE WIDOW IN THE BYE STREET," ETC.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1912

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THE STORY OF A ROUND-HOUSE
AND OTHER POEMS

DAUBER

I

FOUR bells were struck, the watch was called
on deck,

All work aboard was over for the hour,
And some men sang and others played at
check,

Or mended clothes or watched the sunset
glower,

The bursting west was like an opening
flower

And one man watched it till the light was
dim,

But no one went across to talk to him.

He was the Painter in that swift ship's crew,
Lampman and painter, tall, a slight-built
man,

Young for his years and not yet twenty-
two,

Sickly, and not yet brown with the sea's tan.
Bullied and damned at since the voyage
began,

"Being neither man nor seaman, by his
tally,"

He bunked with the idlers just abaft the
galley.

His work began at five; he worked all day,
Keeping no watch and having all night in,
His work was what the mate might care to
say,

He mixed red lead in many a bouilli tin;
His dungarees were smeared with paraffin;
"Go drown himself," his roundhouse mates
advised him

And all hands called him Dauber and de-
spised him.

Si, the apprentice, stood beside the spar,
Stripped to the waist, a basin at his side,
Slushing his hands to get away the tar,
And then he washed himself and rinsed and
dried.

Towelling his face, hair-towzelled, eager-eyed,
He crossed the spar to Dauber and there
stood

Watching the gold of heaven turn to blood.
They stood there by the rail while the swift
ship

Tore on out of the tropics, straining her
sheets,

Whitening her trackway to a milky strip
Dim with green bubbles and twisted water-
meets,

Her clacking tackle tugged at pins and
cleats,

Her great sails bellied hard and her masts
leaned ;

They watched how the seas struck and burst
and greened.

Si talked with Dauber, standing by the side.
“Why did you come to sea, Painter?” he
said,

“I want to be a painter,” he replied,
“And know the sea and ships from A to Z,
And paint great ships at sea before I’m
dead.

Ships under skysails running down the
Trade,
Ships and the sea; there’s nothing finer
made.

“But there’s so much to learn, with sails
and ropes,
And how the sails look, full or being
furled,
And how the lights change in the troughs
and slopes,

And the sea's colours up and down the
world,

And how a storm looks when the sprays are
hurled

High as the yard (they say) I want to see,
There's none ashore can teach such things
to me.

“And then the men and rigging, and the way
Ships move, running or beating, and the poise
At the roll's end, the checking in the sway,
I want to paint them perfect, short of the
noise,

And then the life, the half-decks full of boys,
The fo'c's'les with the men there, dripping
wet :

I know the subjects that I want to get.

“It's not been done, the sea, not yet been
done,

From the inside, by one who really knows,

I'd give up all if I could be the one,
But art comes dear the way the money
goes.

So I have come to sea, and I suppose
Three years will teach me all I want to learn
And make enough to keep me till I earn."

Even as he spoke his busy pencil moved
Drawing the leap of water off the side
Where the great clipper trampled iron-
hooved

Making the blue hills of the sea divide,
Shearing a glittering scatter in her stride,
And leaping on full tilt with all sails draw-
ing

Proud as a war-horse, snuffing battle, paw-
ing.

"I cannot get it yet, not yet," he said,
"That leap and light and sudden change to
green,

And all the glittering from the sunset's red,
And the milky colours where the bursts
have been,

And the great clipper striding like a queen
Over it all, all beauty to the crown,
I see it all, I cannot put it down.

"It's hard, not to be able. There, look
there,

I cannot get the movement nor the light:
Sometimes it almost makes a man despair
To try and try and never get it right.

O, if I could, O, if I only might,
I wouldn't mind what hells I'd have to
pass,

Not if the whole world called me fool and
ass."

Down sank the crimson sun into the sea
The wind cut chill at once, the west grew
dun.

“Out sidelights,” called the mate; “Hi,
where is he?”

The boatswain called, “Out sidelights, damn
you; run.”

“He’s always late or lazing,” murmured
one,

“The Dauber, with his sketching.” Soon
the tints

Of red and green passed on dark water-
glints.

Darker it grew, still darker, and the
stars

Burned golden, and the fiery fishes came.

The wire-note loudened from the straining
spars,

The sheet-blocks clacked together always
the same,

The rushing fishes streaked the seas with
flame,

Racing the one speed noble as their own,

What unknown joy was in those fish unknown.

Just by the roundhouse door as it grew dark
The boatswain caught the Dauber with
“Now, you.

Till now I’ve spared you, damn you, now
you hark,

I’ve just had hell for what you didn’t do.
I’ll have you broke and sent among the
crew

If you get me more trouble by a particle.
Don’t you forget, you daubing, useless article.

“You thing, you twice-laid thing from Port Mahon.”

Then came the cook’s “Is that the Dauber there?

Why don’t you leave them stinking paints alone?

They stink the house out, poisoning all the
air,

Just take them out." "Where to?" "I
don't care where.

I won't have stinking paints here." From
their plates,

"That's right; wet paint breeds fever,"
growled his mates.

He took his still wet drawings from the
berth

And climbed the ladder to the deck-house
top,

Beneath, the noisy half-deck rang with
mirth

For two ship's boys were putting on the
strop.

One, clambering up to let the skylight drop,
Saw him and scuttled down and whispered

"Sammy,

Here's Dauber mooning on the deck-house,
dammy."

"Watch what he does:" they watched;
five pairs of eyes,
Stared through the slit to see what Dauber
did.

They saw him watch the rising moon with
sighs,

Then bend to the ship's long boat on the skid
And lay beneath her something which he
hid.

"Myst'ry in high life," whispered one to
t'other,

"The Foundling Babe, or Who was Peter's
Mother?"

He stayed a moment, leaning on the boat,
Watching the constellations rise and burn,
Until the beauty took him by the throat
So stately is their glittering overturn;

Armies of marching eyes, armies that yearn
With banners rising and falling and passing
by
Over the empty silence of the sky.

He sighed again and looked at the great
sails

To get a memory of their look at night,
The high trucks traced on heaven and left
no trails,

The moonlight made the topsails almost
white,

The passing sidelight seemed to drip green
light

And on the clipper rushed with fire-bright
bows.

He sighed "I'll never do't," and left the
house.

"Now, Sammy," said the reefers. Up they
crept,

Treading on tiptoe, on the Dauber's track.
They groped below the boat, their right
 hands swept
From chock to skid and came rewarded
 back.

“Drawings, Lord love us, sketches, more, a
 stack.

Hush, or they'll hear us. Hush. You little
 fishes,
There's boatswain making Dauber wash the
 dishes.”

They took the drawings to the half-deck.
 There
Under the swinging lamp they looked and
 mocked.

“‘*A boat at night with trawl down, burning
 a flare*’

Lord's me; ‘*An Ocean Charger*’ . . . sickle-
 hocked.

'*At sea.*' I'd do a better three parts
cocked.

'*A topsail,*' without buntlines, Dauber's
style ;

Put end to end they almost reach a mile !"

The oldest reefer lit his pipe and spat,
"We'll have some fun with these," he said.

"Now, Joe,
A job for you, and see you do it pat.
Pick up that empty tin, my son, and go
Aft to the lamp-room."

"Mate's there."

"Even so,
Do what you're told, lay aft and fill that tin
With turps and bring it back, or mind your
skin."

"But Sam, the mate's there." "Jao, you
Kitmutgar ;

Jao ; pasea." He went, he filled the can,
Dodging the mate, and "Here," he said,

"you are ;

This is the turps ; now Sammy, what's the
plan ? "

"Rouse out a mess-clout now, my little
man,

And wash these daubs with turps until
they're gone.

And then we'll put them back. Heave
round. Lay on."

They smeared the paint with turpentine
until

They could remove with mess-clouts every
trace

Of quick perception caught by patient skill
And lines that had brought blood into his
face ;

They wiped the pigments off and did erase,

With knives, all sticking clots: when they
had done

Under the boat they laid them every one.

All he had drawn since first he came to
sea,

His six weeks' leisure fruits, they laid
them there;

They chuckled then to think how mad he'd
be

Finding his paintings vanished into air.

Eight bells were struck, and feet from every-
where

Went shuffling aft to muster in the dark,

The mate's pipe glowed above, a dim red
spark.

Names in the darkness passed and voices
cried,

The red spark glowed and died, the faces
seemed

As things remembered when a brain has
died

To all but high intenseness deeply dreamed ;
Like hissing spears the fishes' fire streamed,
And on the clipper rushed with tossing
mast,

A bath of flame broke round her as she
passed.

The watch was set, the night came, and the
men

Hid from the moon in shadowed nooks to
sleep,

Bunched like the dead, still like the dead, as
when

Plague in a city leaves none even to weep.
The ship's track brightened to a mile-broad
sweep ;

The mate there felt her pulse and eyed the
spars.

Southwest by south she staggered, under
the stars.

Down in his bunk the Dauber lay awake
Thinking of his unfitness for the sea.
Each failure, each derision, each mistake,
There in the life not made for such as
he ;

A morning grim with trouble sure to be,
A noon of pain from failure, and a night
Bitter with men's contemning and despite.

This in the first beginning, the green
leaf,
Still in the Trades before bad weather
fell ;
What harvest would he reap of hate and
grief
When the loud Horn made every life a
hell ?

When the sick ship lay over, clanging her
bell,
And no time came for painting or for draw-
ing,
But all hands fought, and icy death came
clawing?

Hell, he expected, hell. His eyes grew
blind,
The snoring from his messmates droned and
snuffled,
And then a gush of pity calmed his mind
And the sharp torment of his thought was
muffled,
Without, on deck, the old, old seaman
shuffled,
Humming his song, and through the open
door
A moonbeam moved and thrust along the
floor.

The green bunk-curtains moved, the brass
rings clicked,

The cook cursed in his sleep, turning and
turning,

The moonbeam's moving finger touched and
picked

And all the stars in all the sky were burning.

"This is the art I've come for and am learn-
ing,

The sea and ships and men and travelling
things.

It is most proud, whatever pain it brings."

He leaned upon his arm and watched the
light

Sliding and fading to the steady roll ;

This he would some day paint, the ship at
night,

And sleeping seamen tired to the soul,

The space below the bunks as black as coal,

Gleams upon chests, upon the unlit lamp,
The ranging door-hook and the locker clamp.

This he would paint, and that, and all these
scenes,

And proud ships carrying on, and men their
minds,

And blues of rollers toppling into greens
And shattering into white that bursts and
blinds,

And scattering ships running erect like
hinds,

And men in oilskins beating down a sail
High on the yellow yard, in snow, in hail,

With faces ducked down from the slanting
drive

Of half-thawed hail, mixed with half-frozen
spray,

The roaring canvas like a thing alive,

Shaking the mast, knocking their hands
 away,

The footropes jerking to the tug and sway,
The savage eyes salt-reddened at the rims
And icicles on the southwester brims.

And sunnier scenes would grow under his
 brush,

The tropic dawn, with all things dropping
 dew,

The darkness and the wonder and the hush,
The insensate gray before the marvel grew.
Then the veil lifted from the trembling
 blue,

The walls of sky burst in, the flower, the rose,
All the expanse of heaven a mind that
 glows.

He turned out of his bunk; the cook still
 tossed,

One of the other two spoke in his sleep,

A cockroach scuttled where the moonbeam
crossed ;

Outside there was the ship, the night, the
deep.

“It is worth while,” the youth said ; “I will
keep

To my resolve. I’ll learn to paint all this.
My Lord ! my God ! how beautiful it is !”

Outside was the ship’s rush to the wind’s
hurry,

A resonant wire-hum from every rope,
The broadening bow-wash in a fiery flurry,
The leaning masts in their majestic slope,
And all things strange with moonlight : filled
with hope

By all that beauty going as man bade
He turned and slept in peace. Eight bells
were made.

II

Next day was Sunday, his free painting day,
While the fine weather held, from eight till
eight ;

He rose when called at five and did array
The roundhouse gear and set the kit bags
straight.

Then, kneeling down like housemaid at a
grate,

He scrubbed the deck with sand until his
knees

Were blue with dye from his wet dungarees.

He swabbed the deck with clouts till it was
dry,

Ranged straight the chests, scrubbed where
the chests had lain,

Roused out the lockers where the whack-
pots lie,

Wiped all the tins and put them back
again.

Scrubbed at the lamp-room deck with might
and main

To get the oil stains out, then cleaned his
lamps,

Smoked by the night's affairs, greened by its
damps.

Soon all was clean, his Sunday tasks were
done,

His day was clear for painting as he
chose,

The wetted decks were drying in the sun;
The men coiled up, or swabbed, or sought
repose.

The drifts of silver arrows fell and rose
As flying fish took wing and skimmed and
dipped.

A man poured buckets on the bosun stripped.

Eight bells were made. The painter went below.

“Now, Dauber, where’s the breakfast?”
said his mates.

“Now don’t stand staring; take the kettle,
go.

You like to have your loaf, whoever waits.”
He fetched the kettle and the kid of cates,
Coffee and burgoo specked with many a
weevil.

“You’re always last,” the cook growled,
looking evil.

Next, at the meal, the bosun eyed the deck.

“Who cleaned the house out?” “Dauber.”

“So I guessed.

I want this floor made white without a
speck.

Look there by Sails and see the way you’ve
messed;

All tide-marks where you let the water rest :
You've scrubbed in strips and left the space
 between,
And now you'll get a stone and sweat it
 clean."

Then Chips began: "Now, Dauber," he
 began,
"We only tell you this for your own good.
A man at sea has got to be a man
Or do without man's treatment and man's
 food.

We won't have dirt : let that be understood,
Neither in you nor here." "No," said the
 Cook,
"The Dauber hasn't washed his hands yet ;
 look.

"Look at his hands, all oil still to the wrists.
Why do you come to breakfast with such
 hands?

Bringing our breakfast, too, in dirty fists,
Marking my kids: look here at Dauber's
brands."

The bosun spoke: "I've been in some com-
mands.

They'd scrub a man for dirt like that,"
he said;

"Stripped bare, with sand and canvas, in
the head."

Sails spoke again: "Dauber," he said,
"you strip.

Unless you're clean we'll sand-and-canvas
you.

If one man goes he gives it to the ship.
So what the crowd does every one must do.
So strip and scrub or we shall learn you to
With the fore-brace: now do it. Cleanli-
ness

Before burgoon, and painting, too, I guess."

“That’s you,” said all. The Dauber stripped
and soaped ;

His messmates eyed his points and mocked
his build :

His scraggy neck, his shoulders steeply
sloped,

His ribs all sunken in, his chest unfilled,

His arms like stalks, his little hands un-
skilled

To strangle sail in snow squalls off the Horn ;
And all the rest that shouldn’t have been
born.

So precious time was wasted, bell by bell,
Before the washing and the breakfast ended,
The artist’s leisure which the wise gods
sell

Only for life paid down and spirit spendend.
The clipper hove her bows out and de-
scended.

Bright span the bubbles on that glittering
sea.

The Dauber swept the crumbs up and was
free.

Free for two hours and more to tingle deep,
Catching a likeness in a line or tint,
The canvas running up in a proud sweep,
Wind-wrinkled at the clews and white like
lint,

The glittering of the blue waves into glint.
Free to attempt it all, the proud ship's
pawings,

The sea, the sky : he went to fetch his draw-
ings.

Up to the deck-house top he quickly
climbed ;

He stooped to find them underneath the
boat.

He found them all obliterated, slimed,
Blotted, erased, gone from him line and note.
They were all spoiled; a lump came in
his throat,
Being vain of his attempts and tender
skinned.
Beneath the light the watching reefers
grinned.

The knives had made some of the canvas
rough,
Spoiling the surface for a new endeavour.
Three were so spoiled, the rest were good
enough,
Though all they once had borne was gone
for ever.
“Ah, I suppose,” he said, “they think that
clever :

It's easy to destroy ; doing's the pain :
Now I shall have to do them all again.”

He clambered down, holding the ruined things.

“Bosun,” he called, “look here, did you do these?

Wipe off my paints and cut them into strings

And smear them till you can’t tell chalk from cheese.

Don’t stare, but did you do it? Answer, please.”

The bosun turned. “I’ll give you a thick ear.

Do it? I didn’t. Get to hell from here.

“I touch your stinking daubs? The Dauber’s daft.”

A crowd was gathering now to hear the fun,

The reefers tumbled out, the men laid aft,

The cook blinked, cleaning a mess-kid in
the sun ;

“What’s up with Dauber now ?” said every-
one. `

“Someone has spoiled my drawings, look
at this.”

“Well, that’s a dirty trick, by God it is.”

“It is,” said Sam, “a low-down dirty trick
To spoil a fellow’s work in such a way,
And if you catch him, Dauber, punch him
sick,

For he deserves it, be he who he may.”
A seaman shook his old head, wise and gray.

“It seems to me,” he said, “who ain’t no
judge,

Them drawings look much better now
they’re smudge.”

“I think the same,” said Cook ; “and I,”
said Sails,

“Not that that’s consolation, but it’s true.
You find the man and cut him into
wales ;

I would, I tell you flat, if I were you.”

“When was it done?” “Last night.” “I
wonder who.

The three mates look suspicious, don’t they,
fellows ?

It might be them, or is the old man
jealous ?”

“Where were they, Dauber?” “On the
deck-house.” “Where ?”

“Under the long boat, in a secret place.”

“The blackguard must have watched you
put them there.

He is a swine. I tell him to his face.
I didn’t think we’d anyone so base.”

“Nor I,” said Dauber. “There was six
weeks’ time

Just wasted in these drawings; it's a crime."

"Well, don't you say we did it," growled his mates.

"And as for crime, be damned, the things were smears,

Best overboard, like you, with shot for weights.

Thank God they're gone, and now go shake your ears."

The Dauber listened, very near to tears;

"Dauber, if I were you," said Sam again,

"I'd aft, and see the captain, and complain."

A sigh came from the assembled seamen there.

Would he be such a fool for their delight
As go to tell the captain? Would he dare?

And would the thunder roar, the lightning
smite?

There was the captain come to take a
sight,

Handling his sextant by the chart house
aft.

The Dauber turned, the seamen thought
him daft.

The captain took his sights, a mate
below

Noted the times; they shouted to each
other,

The captain quick with "Stop," the answer
slow,

Repeating slowly one height, then another:
The swooping clipper stumbled through the
smother,

The ladder-brasses in the sunlight burned.

The Dauber waited till the captain turned.

Under the jigger-staysail, hat in hand,
Head bent, as fits a suppliant out at sea,
He waited for dismissal or command,
As much alone as any man can be.

The mate was aft about the log, or he
Would have dismissed him forward, no word
said ;

The captain eyed the trim and turned his
head.

There stood the Dauber, humbled to the
bone,

Waiting as though to speak ; he let him
wait,

Glanced at the course and called in even
tone,

“What is the man there wanting, Mr.
Mate ?”

The logship clattered on the grating
straight,

The reel rolled to the scuppers with a
clatter,

The mate came grim: "Well, Dauber,
what's the matter?"

"Please, sir, they spoiled my drawings."

"Who did?" "They."

"Who's they?" "I don't quite know, sir."

"Don't quite know, sir?"

Then why are you aft to talk about it, hey?

Whom d'you complain of?" "No one."

"No one?" "No, sir."

"Well, then, go forward till you've found
them. Go, sir.

If you complain of someone, then I'll see.

Now get to hell and don't come bothering
me."

"But, sir, they washed them off and some
they cut.

Look here, sir, how they spoiled them."

"Never mind.

Go shove your head inside the scuttle butt
And that will make you cooler. You will
find

Nothing like water when you're mad and
blind.

Where were the drawings? In your chest
or where?"

"Under the long boat, sir; I put them
there."

"Under the long boat, hey? Now mind
your tip.

I'll have the skids kept clear with nothing
round them.

The long boat ain't a store in this here ship,
Lucky for you it wasn't I who found them.
If I had seen them, Dauber, I'd have
drowned them.

Now you be warned by this. I tell you
plain,
Don't stow your brass-rags under boats
again.

"Go forward to your berth." The Dauber
turned.

The listeners down below them winked
and smiled,

Knowing how red the Dauber's temples
burned.

Having lost the case about his only child
His work was done to nothing and defiled,
And there was no redress: the captain's
voice

Spoke, and called "Painter," making him
rejoice.

The captain and the mate conversed to-
gether.

“Drawings, you tell me, Mister?” “Yes,
sir, views:

Wiped off with turps, I gather that’s his
blether.

He says they’re things he can’t afford to lose.
He’s Dick, who came to sea in dancing
shoes

And found the dance a bear dance. They
were hidden

Under the long boat’s chocks, which I’ve
forbidden.”

“Wiped off with turps?” The captain
sucked his lip.

“Who did it, Mister?” “Reefers, I sup-
pose.

Them devils do the most pranks in a
ship;

The roundhouse might have done it, cook
or bouse.”

“I can’t take notice of it till he knows.
How does he do his work?” “Well, no
offence;
He tries; he does his best. He’s got no
sense.”

“Painter,” the captain called; the Dauber
came.

“What’s all this talk of drawings? What’s
the matter?”

“They spoiled my drawings, sir.” “Well,
who’s to blame?

The long boat’s there for no one to get at
her;

You broke the rules, and if you choose to
scatter

Gear up and down where it’s no right to
be

And suffer as result, don’t come to
me.

“Your place is in the roundhouse, and
your gear

Belongs where you belong. Who spoiled
your things?

Find out who spoiled your things and fetch
him here.”

“But, sir, they cut the canvas into strings.”

“I want no argument nor questionings.
Go back where you belong and say no
more,

And please remember that you’re not on
shore.”

The Dauber touched his brow and slunk
away ;

They eyed his going with a bitter eye.

“Dauber,” said Sam, “what did the cap-
tain say?”

The Dauber drooped his head without
reply.

“Go forward, Dauber, and enjoy your
cry.”

The mate limped to the rail and conned
the craft,

“Bosun,” he called: the bosun hurried
aft.

“What’s this of Dauber’s drawings being
spoiled?”

The bosun spat. “The come-day-go-day
fool,

A junk-laid twice-laid hank of left-hand-
coiled:

The reefers done it last night in the
cool.

His job’s the minder’s in an infant school;
Not coming to sea: the reefers done’t at
night.

They scoffed the lot, and I say serve him
right.

“He’s always playing hell with paints or
chalk,

Making some mess or other, or a stink.”

“Right,” said the mate; he turned, re-
sumed his walk,

Watching the trembling water droop and
blink.

The topsail sheets would home another link.

He gave the order; the strong-shouldered
men

Hauled, singing out, belayed, and slouched
again.

“Well, that,” exclaimed the mate; he eyed
the trim;

All things were romping full, the Trade
Wind clouds

Like flocks on the horizon clustered dim;
Black shadows crossed the deck from stays
and shrouds.

The wavering silver arrows rose in crowds.

“Bosun,” he cried, and when the man drew
near,

“In future see the long-boat skids kept
clear.

“Go round them every night. See round
the boats.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” said the bosun: all was said.
Two brace blocks piped aloft in different
notes,

The reef points pattered softly overhead.
Softly, but hurrying, too, as children tread,
A hush, a long swift hurry of little feet,
So faint, so sure, the drumming reef points
beat.

The Dauber reached the berth and entered
in.

Much mockery followed after as he went,

And each face seemed to greet him with
the grin

Of hounds hot following on a creature spent.

“Aren’t you a fool?” each mocking visage
meant.

“Who did it, Dauber? What did cap-
tain say?

It is a crime, and there’ll be hell to pay.”

He bowed his head, the house was full of
smoke,

The Sails was pointing shackles on his
chest.

“Lord, Dauber, be a man and take a
joke” —

He puffed his pipe — “and let the matter
rest.

Spit brown, my son, and get a hairy breast;
Get shoulders on you at the crojick braces,
And let this painting business go to blazes.

“What good can painting do to anyone?
I don’t say never do it; far from that,
No harm in sometimes painting just for
fun.

Keep it for fun, and stick to what you’re at.
Your job’s to fill your bones up and get
fat,
Rib up like Barney’s bull and thicken your
neck,
Throw paints to hell, boy, you belong on
deck.”

“That’s right,” said Chips, “it’s downright
good advice.

Painting’s no good. What good can paint-
ing do

Up on a lower topsail stiff with ice,
With all your little fishhooks frozen blue?
Painting won’t help you at the weather
clew

Nor pass your gaskets for you, nor make
sail;

Painting's a balmy's job not worth a nail.

“Of course some famous painters do it
well,

Make money, too; there's Hogarth did it
right,

Who did the Harlot's Progress, that they
sell

In Tiger Bay and up in Fan's Delight:
You'd think the views, perhaps, a bawdy
sight.

But I was shipmates one time with a mate
Who said he use't to keep his daughter
straight.

“And then there's others said to do it
good

As well as Hogarth, better, too, but then

Them ducks are born with painting in the
blood,

They know the business and are famous
men.

I saw some pictures by them one time when
I came to London in the *Golden Rose*.

I tell you, Dauber, they were pictures,
those.

“Like life some of the sheep were, beautiful,
They stood right out, you could have heard
them bleat :

But for the glass you could have felt their
wool,

And count the grass blades underneath their
feet.

And plums, like real, you could have almost
eat.

And one called ‘Tragic News,’ a young
girl sighing.

You'll never paint like them, it's no use
trying.

"Wasting your time I call it, what you do,
Getting good paint and canvas slopped and
messed.

A Chinaman does better ships than you
For half a dollar in a reefer's chest.

I tell you frankly, drop it, you'd be best
Drop it before you must, and don't think
twice.

You'll thank me some day for my good
advice."

The Dauber did not answer; time was
passing.

He pulled his easel out, his paints, his
stool.

The wind was dropping and the sea was
glassing.

New realms of beauty waited for his rule.
The draught out of the crojick kept him
cool.

He sat to paint, alone and melancholy.
“No turning fools,” the Chips said, “from
their folly.”

He dipped his brush, and tried to fix a line,
And then came peace, and gentle beauty
came,

Turning his spirit's water into wine,
Lightening his darkness with a touch of
flame :

O joy of trying for beauty, ever the same,
You never fail, your comforts never end ;
O balm of this world's way, O perfect
friend.

There the four leaning spires of canvas
rose,

Royals and skysails lifting, gently lifting,
White like the brightness that a great fish
blows

When billows are at peace and ships are
drifting:

With mighty jerks that set the shadows
shifting,

The courses tugged their tethers: a blue
haze

Drifted like ghosts of flocks come down to
graze.

There the great skyline made her perfect
round,

Notched now and then by the sea's deeper
blue,

A smoke-smutch marked a steamer home-
ward bound,

The haze wrought all things to intenser
hue.

In tingling impotence the Dauber drew
As all men draw, keen to the shaken soul,
To give a hint that might suggest the
whole.

A naked seaman washing a red shirt
Sat at a tub whistling between his teeth;
Complaining blocks quavered like something
hurt.

A sailor cut an old boot for a sheath,
The ship bowed to her shadow-ship beneath
And little slaps of spray came at the roll
On to the deck planks from the scupper-
hole.

He watched it, painting patiently, as paints
With eyes that pierce behind the blue sky's
veil

The Benedictine in a Book of Saints
Watching the passing of the Holy Grail,

The green dish dripping blood, the trump,
the hail,
The spears that pass, the memory and the
passion,
The beauty moving under this world's
fashion.

The reefers watched him from the deck-
house top,

Eager lest any rope should be mislaid,
Or grubbing under boats for yarns to drop
On to the colours on his palette 'splayed:
Many a mock, many a jest they made.
“Is it a ship he's doing?” “Ask him.”

“No,
That's not a ship, Dick; it's a raree show.”

He painted on, not caring, hardly hearing,
He breathed another air within his brain,
He saw the image of his thought appearing,

His minute's power made his pathway plain.
He was achieving now, he would attain
Past peak and stopping place on art's slow
 rise
To miracles of ships and seas and skies.

III

They lost the Trades soon after ; then came
 calm,
Light little gusts and rain, which soon in-
 creased
To glorious northers shouting out a psalm
At seeing the bright blue water silver-fleeced.
Horn-wards she rushed, trampling the seas
 to yeast ;
There fell a rain-squall in a blind day's
 end,
When for an hour the Dauber found a
 friend

Out of the rain the voices called and passed,
The staysails flogged, the tackle yanked and
shook ;

Inside the harness-room a lantern cast
Light and wild shadows as it ranged its
hook.

The watch on deck was gathered in the
nook.

They had taken shelter in that secret place ;
Wild light gave wild emotions to each face.

One beat the beef-cask and the others sang
A song that had brought anchors out of
seas

In ports where bells of Christians never
rang,

Nor any sea-mark blazed among the trees.
By forlorn swamps, in ice, by windy keys,
That song had sounded ; now it shook the
air

From these eight wanderers brought together there.

Under the poop-break, sheltering from the rain,

The Dauber sketched some likeness of the room,

A note to be a prompting to his brain,

A spark to make old memory re-illumine.

"Dauber," said someone near him in the gloom,

"How goes it, Dauber?" It was reefer Si.

"There's not much use in trying to keep dry."

"No," said the Dauber. "What you doing?" "Drawing . . .

Drawing the watch in there." "A jolly crowd. . . .

They're always having sing-songs or else
jawing.

If I could paint like you, Daub, I'd be proud.
The mate's just overhead, so don't talk loud.
I'd like to paint like you. Sit down and talk.
The deck's too swimming wet to take a
caulk."

They sat upon the sail-room doorway coam-
ing ;

The lad held forth like youth ; the Dauber
listened

To how the boy had had a taste for roam-
ing,

And what the sea is said to be and isn't.

Where the dim lamplight fell the wet deck
glistened ;

Si said the Horn was still two weeks away.

"But tell me, Dauber, where d'you hail
from? Eh?"

The rain blew past and let the stars appear,
The seas grew larger as the moonlight grew,
For half an hour the ring of heaven was
clear,

Dusty with moonlight, grey rather than
blue ;

In that great moon the showing stars were
few.

The sleepy time-boy's feet passed overhead.
"I come from out past Gloucester," Dauber
said.

"Not far from Pauntley, if you know those
parts ;

The place is Spital Farm near Silver Hill,
Above a traphatch where a mill stream
starts.

We had the mill once, but we've stopped the
mill.

My dad and sister keep the farm on still.

We're only tenants, but we've rented there,
Father and son, for over eighty year.

“My grandad had it first, as a young man,
During Napoleon's wars, oh, years ago.

Farming was rich man's work when he be-
gan,

And he could farm; he made the corn to
grow,

He cropped on bits we wouldn't even sow.

There were big profits then on breadstuffs;
he

Had thirty acres corn where we have three.

“I've heard my father say that grandfer
said

That when he first began and 'tended fairs,

The farmers' ordinaries, where they fed,

Would charge the men a guinea each for
chairs,

And fiddlers came, all dinner, playing airs,
And all men drank champagne. That
 would seem strange
In farmers' inns to-day after Exchange.

“Well, grandfer had the farm until he died.
He held it sixty years from the same squire,
He saw great changes in that country-
 side,
And miles of cornland go again to mire,
And men, who'd drunk champagne, without
 a fire,
For corn came down to nothing with a
 run
And never rose after the wars were done.

“Father was born the year the riots were
In Bristol, so he says; my grandma said
That when they burnt the town she saw the
 glare,

Making the sky at midnight deep dull
red.

She saw it kindling as she lay in bed
Just after dad was born, dad in the cot,
And nurse beside her snoring like a sot.

“ Father has worked the farm since grandfer
went ;

It means the world to him, I can't think
why.

They bleed him to the last half-crown for
rent,

And this and that have almost milked him
dry.

The land's all starved ; if he'd put money
by,

And corn was up and rent was down two-
thirds. . . .

But then they aren't, so what's the use of
words ?

“Yet all the same it means the world to
him,
The Spital Farm that he and grandfer
made;
They’ve given their lives to bring it into
trim,
They’ve worn out many a plough and many
a spade,
And worked a many a cart-horse to a jade,
Dragging the waggons off the empty field;
It’s his life’s fight; he doesn’t like to yield.

“And then his life’s been spent there, man
and boy;
He courted mother there, and lived there
after.
He’s had his sixty years there, and his
joy;
He’s had his happy blessings and his laugh-
ter.

He cut our names and grandfer's on a
rafter.

He hopes his children's names, when he is
cold,

Will fill the rafter full as it will hold.

“He couldn't bear to see the Spital pass
To strangers, or to think a time would
come

When other men than us would mow the
grass,

And other names than ours have the home.
Some sorrows come from evil thought, but
some

Come when two men are near and both are
blind

To what is generous in the other's mind.

“My mother came from under Meon Hill;
She died when I was only ten, poor woman!

I know my memory of her's living still,
And will, I hope, as long as I'm a human.
For no man had a mother like her, no man.
She wasn't like my father: rose and oak.
It wasn't marriage, but the Devil's joke.

“I was the only boy, and father thought
I'd farm the Spital after he was dead,
And many a time he took me out and taught
About manures and seed-corn white and
red,
And soils and hops; but I'd an empty head.
Harvest or seed, I would not do a turn;
I loathed the farm, I didn't want to learn.

“After my mother died, when I was ten,
I went about more while the work was
doing,
And, being a boy, I liked to help the men,
And taste the pomace at the cider screwing,

And ride the plough team to the forge for
shoeing,

Or pick in hop yard, but I would not do
The harder lessons father set me to.

“And when he tried to teach me how to
plough,

I wanted him to tell me how the earth
Nourished the seed-corn in the dark, and
how

The sun and rain could give the green grass
birth,

And why there was no remedy for dearth,
And such-like simple questionings; but
when

He tried to tell, I was for ploughing then.

“He did not mind at first, he thought it
youth

Feeling the collar, and that I should change;

Then time gave him some inklings of the
truth,

And that I loathed the farm and wished to
range.

Truth to a man of fifty's always strange;
It was most strange and terrible to him;
It took his lamp just when his light grew
dim.

"Yet still he hoped the Lord might change
my mind.

I'd see him bridle-in his wrath and hate,
And almost break my heart he was so kind,
Biting his lips sore with resolve to wait.
And then I'd try awhile: but it was Fate:
I didn't want to learn; the farm to me
Was mire and hopeless work and misery.

"Though there were things I loved about it,
too,

The beasts, the apple trees, and going
haying,

And then I tried; but no, it wouldn't do,
The farm was prison and my thoughts were
straying.

And there'd come father, with his grey
head, praying.

'Oh my dear son, don't let the Spital pass:
It's my old home, boy, where your grandfer
was.

“ ‘And now you won't learn farming; you
don't care;

The old home's nought to you. I've tried
to teach you,

I've begged Almighty God, boy, all I dare,
To use His hand if word of mine won't
reach you.

Boy, for your grandfer's sake I do beseech
you,

Don't let the Spital pass to strangers.

Squire

Has said he'd give it you if we require.

“‘Your mother used to walk here, boy,
with me;

It was her favourite walk down to the
mill,

And there we'd talk how little death would
be

Knowing our work was going on here still.
You've got the brains, you only want the
will.

Don't disappoint your mother and your
father.

I'll give you time to travel, if you'd rather.'

“It wasn't travelling, though, that filled my
mind;

I could forget the farm by wandering out,

Tracing the little brooks and trying to
find

A gravelly stretch with belly-rubbing trout.
Or, trickling from a dock-leaf in the spout,
Beside some lonely cottage up the hill,
The source of waters that would turn our
mill.

“That’s what I loved, water, and time to
read.

Then I’d come home to sister’s nagging
tongue,

Saying my sin made father’s heart to
bleed,

And how she feared she’d live to see me
hung.

And then she’d read me bits from Dr.
Young,

And supper would begin, and sister Jane
Would fillip dad till dad began again.

“‘I’ve been here all my life, boy. I was
born

Up in the room above, looks on the mead;
I never thought you’d cockle my clean corn
And leave the old home to a stranger’s seed.
Father and I have made here ’thout a weed:
We’ve give our lives to make that. Eighty
years.

And now I go down to the grave in tears.’

“And then I’d get ashamed and take off
coat,

And work maybe a week, ploughing or sowing,
ing,

And then I’d creep away and sail my
boat,

Or watch the water when the mill was
going.

That’s my delight, to be near water flowing,
ing,

Dabbling or sailing boats or jumping stanks
Or finding moorhens' nests along the banks.

“Then dad would catch me come away from
work,

Going along the water, watching things,
And lose his temper, p'raps, and call me
shirk,

And then we'd words, and tears, and par-
donings,

And then I'd work, until the brooks and
springs

Drew me away again to my heart's joy.

I did love being by water as a boy.

“One day my father found a ship I'd built ;
He took the cart whip to me over that,
And I, half mad with pain and sick with
guilt,

Went up and hid in what we called the flat :

A dusty hole given over to the cat;
She kittened there, the kittens had worn
 paths
Among the cobwebs, dust, and broken
 laths.

“So there I blubbered in the dust awhile,
With bits of plaster dropping in my eyes.
And then the little kittens made me smile,
They were so cunning planning a surprise.
There was a hole with sunlight full of flies,
And they’d come creeping up and pounce
 and miss,
And I got interested, watching this.

“And putting down my hand between the
 beams
I felt a leathery thing and pulled it clear;
A book with white cocoons stuck in the
 seams;

The spiders had had nests there many a
year.

It was my mother's sketch-book ; hid, I fear,
Out of my father's sight : he couldn't bear
For her to do a thing he couldn't share.

“There were her drawings, done when she
was a girl,

Before she knew what sorrow was, or dad ;
Before she put her front hair out of curl ;
She'd leisure then for drawing, mother had.
She'd hid them in the roof like something
bad,

Something she dare not show or felt a
shame of,

For fear of being chid or made a game of.

“That was a find for me, that was a
treasure,

I didn't heed my cart-whip weals a scrap.

And most the valley pictures gave me
pleasure,

With fields like counties in a printed map,
Or Bredon Hill in cloud wearing his cap,
Or Meon (where she played), or Sheepey
Top,

Or sunny hayfields full of clover cop.

“And one of Bristol. On her wedding-
day

They went to Bristol by the Gloucester
mail,

And father sparked her out to see the play,
Maria's Necklace and the Winter's Tale.

There was the yellow playbill withered
pale,

Stuck in the book, and then a sketch she
did

Before she stopped being Queen or father
chid.

“There were the dates upon them, pencilled
faint ;

March was the last one, eighteen sixty-
three,

Unfinished, that, for tears had smeared the
paint ;

The rest was landscape not yet brought to
be.

That was a holy afternoon to me,
That book a sacred book, the flat a place
Where I could meet my mother face to
face.

“It was my secret room from that time on.

O many a golden time I spent up there.

Father and sister wondered where I'd gone,

But I was in the cobwebs, in my lair,

And through the peephole letting in the air

I could command the valley at a look

And draw it on a blank page in the book.

“And after that drawing became my joy.
I cared for nothing else. I drew, I drew
Faster than dad or sister could destroy,
For everything I saw I tried to do.
To see the thing distinct and get it true,
And catch the very motion, as when grass
Or corn is ruffled when the flurries pass.

“That was my aim: I worked at that, I
 toiled,
And every penny I could get I spent
On paints, crayons, or paper which I spoiled
Up in the attic to my heart's content,
Till one day father asked me what I meant;
The time had come, he said, to make an end;
Now it must finish: what did I intend?

“Either I took to farming, like his son,
In which case he would teach me, early and
 late

(Provided that my daubing mood was done)
Or I must go: it must be settled straight.
If I refused to farm: there was the gate.
I was to choose, his patience was all gone;
The present state of things could not go on.

“Sister was there, she eyed me while he
spoke,
The kitchen clock ran down and struck the
hour,
And something told me father’s heart was
broke,
For all he stood so set and looked so sour.
Jane took a duster and began to scour
A pewter on the dresser; she was crying.
I stood stock still a long time, not reply-
ing.

“‘Well, Joe,’ said Dad, ‘which is it going
to be?’

He waited; I said nothing; the clock
ticked;

The cat with half-closed eyes purred at us
three;

The wagging corner of the duster flicked.

I felt like a traitor in a story, tricked,

My secret writings found, my plots laid
bare,

And my king come for me to answer there.

“Dad waited, then he snorted and turned
round,

‘Well, think of it,’ he said; he left the
room.

His boots went clop along the stony
ground

Out to the orchard and the apple bloom.

A cloud came over the sun and made a
gloom.

I swallowed with dry lips; then sister turned.

She was dead white but for her eyes that
burned.

“‘You’re breaking father’s heart, Joe,” she
began.

‘It’s not as if . . .’ she checked, in too much
pain.

“O Joe, don’t help to kill so fine a man.
You’re giving him our mother over again.
It’s wearing him to death, Joe, heart and
brain.

You know what store he sets on leaving this
To (it’s too cruel) — to a son of his.

“‘Yet you go painting all the day. Oh,
Joe,

Couldn’t you make an effort? · Can’t you
see

What folly it is of yours? It’s not as
though

You are a genius or could ever be.

Oh, Joe, for father's sake, if not for me

Give up this craze for painting and be
wise,

And work with father, where your duty lies.'

"'It goes too deep,' I said; 'I loathe the
farm;

I couldn't help, even if I'd the mind.

Even if I helped I'd only do him harm.'

Father would see it if he were not blind.

I was not built to farm, as he would find.

Oh, Jane, it's bitter hard to stand alone,

And spoil my father's life or spoil my
own.'

"'Spoil both,' she said, 'the way you're
shaping now.

You're only a boy not knowing your own
good.

Where will you go, suppose you leave here?

how

Do you propose to earn your daily food?

Draw? Daub the pavements? There's a

feckless brood

Goes to the devil daily, Joe, in cities

Only from thinking how divine their wit is.

“‘Clouds are they, without water, carried

away,

And you'll be one of them, the way you're

going,

Daubing at silly pictures all the day

And praised by silly fools who're always

blowing.

And you choose this when you might go

a-sowing,

Casting the good corn into chosen mould

That shall in time bring forth a hundred-

fold.'

“So we went on, but in the end, it ended.
I felt I’d done a murder, I felt sick.

There’s much in human minds cannot be
mended,

And that, not I, played dad a cruel trick.

There was one mercy: that it ended quick.

It did not drag along through years of
care,

Spoiling our lives and ending in despair.

“And then I joined my mother’s brother:
he

Kept school at Braddoclode by Severn
stream;

A man so broken down by misery

His life went by him in a kind of dream.

But sometimes in his eyes there’d come a
gleam

Remembering one he’d loved there years
before,

Drowned by the tide, poor woman, off the
shore.

“And there I learned house-painting for a
living;

I'd have been happy there, but that I knew
I'd sinned before my father past forgiving,
And that they sat at home, that silent two,
Wearing the fire out and the evening
through,

Silent, defeated, broken, in despair,
My plate unset, my name gone, and my
chair.

“Sitting and hardly talking: father think-
ing

How when he died the auctioneers would sit
Blue-pencilling their lists where he sat;
drinking,

Marking the sales or knocking off to spit.

The glass would be all broke, the grate
unlit,

The beasts gone from the barton: auction
bills

Stuck on the trees or hung from window-
sills.

“And boot-marks and cigar-ends on the
grass,

And the old name gone from the ancient
hold,

And none but Jane to see the Spital
pass

To one who had not walked its fields of
old;

And strangers there, before his blood was
cold

Down in the grave, changing his old routine,
Putting the tallat where the oasts had
been.

“I saw all that ; and sister Jane came white,
White as a ghost, with fiery weeping eyes,
I saw her all day long and half the night,
Bitter as gall, and passionate and wise.

‘Joe, you have killed your father : there
he lies.

You have done your work, you with our
mother’s ways.’

She said it plain, and then her eyes would
blaze.

“And then one day I had a job to do,
Down below bridge, by where the docks
begin ;

And there I saw a clipper towing through
The open gates ; she was just entering in.
Raked to the nines she was, lofty and thin,
A skysail-yarded clipper so well kept
She glistened like a racehorse as she
stepped.

“That altered life for me; I had never
seen

A ship before, for all my thought of ships;
And there was this great clipper like a
queen,

With a white curl of bubbles at her lips,
All made of beauty to the stern's ellipse,
Her ensign ruffling red, her bunts in pile,
Beauty and strength together, wonder, style.

“She docked close to the gates and there
she lay

Over the stream from me, but well in sight.
And as I worked I watched her all the day,
Finding her beauty ever fresh delight.

Her house-flag was bright green with strips
of white;

High in the sunny air it rose to shake
Above the skysail poles' most splendid
rake.

“For six weeks more I was kept painting
there

Down below bridge, where all the river’s
salt,

And every day her beauty seemed more fair,
And came more home to make my heart
exalt.

Her lines, her spiring masts without a fault,
Her fan of mighty rigging reaching down:
She was a thing too queenly for a crown.

“I wasn’t happy then; I felt too keenly
How hard it is to paint; but when I saw
Her masts across the river rising queenly,
Built out of so much chaos brought to
law,

I learned the power of knowing how to
draw,

Of beating thought into the perfect line,
I vowed to make that power of beauty mine.

“And when I felt unhappy I would look
Over the river at her, and her pride,
So calm, so quiet, came as a rebuke
To half the passionate pathways which I
tried.

And though the green leaves browned and
brown leaves died,
And dead leaves fell and cold November
came,
She was still splendid there, and still the
same.

“Then on a day she sailed; but when she
went

My mind was clear on what I had to try;
To see the sea and ships and what they
meant.

That was the thing I longed to do; so I
Drew and worked hard and studied, and
put by,

And thought of nothing else but that one
end,

But let all else go hang : love, money, friend.

“And now I’ve shipped as Dauber I’ve be-
gun.

It was hard work to find a dauber’s berth.

I hadn’t any friends to find me one ;

Only my skill, for what it may be worth.

But I’m at sea now, going about the earth,

And when the ship’s paid off, when we re-
turn,

I’ll join some Paris studio and learn.

“I shan’t be much too old to join a school.

I want to learn my craft ; I want to
show

Father and sister that I’m not a fool,

And that the world has thought me wise
to go.

It makes my heart ache thinking of them,
 though,
For even if my painting made a blaze,
They'd think me sinner still; they would
 not praise."

He stopped, the air came moist; Si did not
 speak;
The Dauber turned his eyes to where he
 sat,
Pressing the sail-room hinges with his
 cheek,
His face half covered with a drooping
 hat.
Huge dewdrops from the staysails dropped
 and spat.
Si did not stir, the Dauber touched his
 sleeve,
A little birdlike noise came from a
 sheave.

Si was asleep, sleeping a calm, dead sleep ;
Still as a warden of the Egyptian dead,
In some old haunted temple buried deep
Under the desert sand sterile and red.

The Dauber shook his arm. Si jumped,
and said,

“Good yarn, I swear. I say, you have a
brain ;

Was that eight bells that went ?” he slept
again.

One bell was struck ; one bell. The watch
was called.

A match flared in the half-deck and went
out.

Forward, within the fo’c’s’le, someone
bawled,

The reefer in the half-deck raised his shout.
Each sleeper slowly roused, blinked like a
lout,

Cursed, fumbled for his pipe in sleep's
thick fog,

And then relapsed, dead heavy, like a log.

Si rubbed his eyes: "I've had a nap," he
said.

"Was that one bell? What, Dauber, you
still here?"

"Si, there," the mate's voice called from
overhead.

The order made the lad's thick vision
clear;

A something in the mate's voice made
him fear.

"Si," said the mate, "I hear you've made
a friend;

Dauber, in short. That friendship's got
to end.

"You're a young gentleman. Your place
aboard

Is with the gentlemen, abaft the mast,
You're learning to command; you can't
afford

To yarn with any man. But there . . .
It's past.

You've done it once; let this time be the
last.

The Dauber's place is forward. Do it
again,

I'll put you bunking forward with the
men.

"Dismiss." Si went; but Sam, beside the
mate,

Time-keeper there, walked with him to the
rail

And whispered him the menace of "You
wait";

Words which have turned full many a reefer
pale.

The watch was changed : the watch on deck
trimmed sail.

Sam, going below, called all the reefers
down,

Sat in his bunk, and eyed them with a
frown.

“Si, here,” he said, “has spoiled the half-
deck’s name,

Talking to Dauber — Dauber, the ship’s
clout.

A reefer takes the Dauber for a flame ;
The half-deck take the roundhouse walking
out.

He’s soiled the half-deck’s honour. Now,
no doubt

The bosun and his mates will come here
sneaking,

Asking for smokes, or blocking gangways
speaking.

“I’m not a vain man, given to blow or
boast ;

I’m not a proud man ; but I truly feel
That while I’ve bossed this mess and ruled
this roast

I’ve kept this hooker’s half-deck damned
genteel.

Si must ask pardon, or be made to squeal.
Down on your knees, dog ; them we love we
chasten.

Joa, pasea, my son; in English, hasten.”

Si begged for pardon, meekly kneeling down
Before the reefers’ mess assembled grim.

The lamp above them smoked the glass all
brown ;

Beyond the door the dripping sails were
dim.

The Dauber passed the door ; none spoke to
him.

He sought his berth and slept, or, waking,
heard
Rain on the deck-house ; rain, no other word.

IV

The glorious northers lasted from the
Trades.

They, too, were dropped, and still the ship
did shoulder

The brilliance of the water's white cockades
Into the milky green of smoky smoulder,
The sky grew bluer and the air grew colder ;
Southward she thundered while the northers
held,

Proud, with taut bridles, pawing, but compelled.

And still the Dauber strove, though all men
mocked,

To draw the splendour of the passing
thing ;

And deep inside his heart a something
locked,

Long pricking in him, now began to
sting

A fear of the disasters storm might bring.

His rank as painter would be ended then ;

He would keep watch, and watch like other
men.

And go aloft high on the yellow yard,

When the great ship was rolling scuppers
under,

Burying her snout all round the compass
card,

While the green water struck at her and
stunned her ;

When the lee-rigging slacked, when one
long thunder

Boomed from the black to windward, when
the sail

Booted and spurred the devil in the gale

For him to ride on men: that was the
time

The Dauber dreaded; then the test would
come,

When seas, half-frozen, slushed the decks
with slime

And all the air was blind with flying
scum;

When the great sails were furled, when the
fierce hum

Of the weather rigging died in the great
roar

Of the southwester never tamed by shore.

He looked aloft. He had once worked aloft,
Shifting her suits one summer afternoon,

In the bright Trade wind, when the wind
 was soft,
Shaking the points, making the tackle
 croon :
But that was child's play to the future ;
 soon
He would be ordered up when sails and
 spars
Were flying and going mad among the
 stars.

He had been afraid that first time ; daunted,
 thrilled,
Not by the height so much as by the
 size ;
And then the danger to the man unskilled
In standing on a rope that runs through
 eyes.
“But in a storm,” he thought, “when the
 yards rise

And roll all down together, and snap their
gear ! ”

The sweat came cold upon his palms for
fear.

Even ashore he had sometimes felt a pang,
Swinging below the house-eaves on a stage ;
But stages carry rails : here he would hang
Upon a jerking rope in a storm's rage,
Ducked, that the sheltering oilskin might
assuage

The beating of the storm, clutching the jack,
Beating the sail and being beaten back.

Drenched, frozen, gasping, blinded, beaten
dumb.

High in the night, reeling great blinding
arcs

As the ship rolled, his chappy fingers numb,
The deck below a narrow blur of marks,

The sea a welter of whiteness shot with
sparks

Now snapping up in bursts, now dying
away,

Salting the horizontal snow with spray.

A hundred and thirty feet above the deck,
And there, while the ship rolls, boldly to
sit

Upon a footrope moving, jerk and check,
While half-a-dozen seamen work on it.

Held by one hand, straining, by strength
and wit,

To toss a gasket's coil around the yard:
How could he compass that, when blowing
hard?

And if he failed in any least degree,
Or faltered for an instant, or showed slack,
He might go drown himself in the deep sea,

And add seven bubbles to the clipper's
track.

He had signed his name ; there was no turn-
ing back,

No pardon for default ; this must be done.
One iron rule at sea binds everyone.

Till now he had been treated with con-
tempt,

As neither man nor thing : a creature borne
On the ship's articles but left exempt
From all the seamen's life except their
scorn.

But he would rank as seaman off the Horn ;
Work as a seaman, and be kept or cast
By standards set for men before the mast.

Even now they shifted suits of sails ; they
bent

The storm-suit ready for the expected time.

The mighty norther that the Plate had lent
Had brought them far into the wintry
clime.

At dawn, out of the shadow, there was rime ;
The dim Magellan clouds were frosty clear,
The wind had edge, the testing time was
near.

And then he wondered if the tales were lies
Told by old hands to terrify the new ;
For, since the ship left England, only twice
Had there been need to start a sheet or
clew ;

Then only royals, for an hour or two,
And no seas broke aboard, nor was it cold.
What were these gales of which the stories
told ?

The thought went by. He had heard the
bosun tell

Too often and too fiercely not to know
That being off the Horn in June is hell;
Hell of continual toil in ice and snow,
Wet through for weeks, hearing the wester
 blow,
Blow — shriek aloud for weeks. Hear
 without check
The thunder of green seas bursting white
 on deck.

Such was the weather he might look to
 find,
Such was the work expected: there re-
 mained
Firmly to set his teeth, resolve his mind,
And be the first, however much it pained,
And bring his honour round the Horn un-
 stained
And win his mates' respect, and thence,
 untainted,

Be ranked as man, however much he
painted.

He drew deep breath; a gantline swayed
aloft

A new lower topsail hard with rope and
leather,

Such as men's frozen fingers fight with oft
Below the Ramirez in Cape Horn weather,
The arms upon the yard hove all together,
Lighting the head along; a thought oc-
curred

Within the Painter's brain like a bright
bird.

That this, and so much like it, of man's
toil

Compassed by naked manhood in strange
places,

Was all heroic, but outside the coil

Within which modern art gleams or grimaces,

That if he drew that line of sailors' faces
Sweating the sail, their passionate play and
change,

It would be new and wonderful and
strange.

That was what going aloft meant, it would
be

A training in new vision, a revealing
Of passionate men in battle with the
sea

High on an unseen stage shaking and reeling,
ing,

And men through him would understand
their feeling

Their might, their misery, their tragic
power,

And all by suffering pain a little hour,

High on the yard with them, feeling their
pain,

Battling with them; and it had not been
done.

He was a door to new worlds in the
brain,

A window opening letting in the sun,

A voice saying, "Thus is bread fetched and
ports won,

And life lived out at sea where men
exist

Solely by man's strong brain and sturdy
wrist."

Wonders of marvellous pictures touched his
thought;

He would endure it all, endure and learn,
Sharing the life till every gleam was caught
In agony's bitter etchings that so burn.

Then months of training after his return,

And then the dream fulfilled, the power to
show

All he had seen and had the power to know.

So he decided as he cleaned his brasses,
Heading without, aloft, the curse, the shout
Where the taut gantline passes and re-
passes

Heaving new topsails to be lighted out.

It was most proud, however self might
doubt,

To share man's tragic toil and paint it true.
He took the offered Fate: this he would do.

That night the snow fell between six and
seven,

A little feathery fall so light, so dry,
An aimless dust out of a confused heaven,
Upon an air no steadier than a sigh,
The powder dusted down and wandered by,

So purposeless, so many, and so cold,
Then died and the wind ceased and the
ship rolled.

Rolled till she clanged, rolled till the brain
was tired

Marking the acme of the heaves, the pause,
While the sea-beauty rested and respired.
Drinking great draughts of roller at her
hawse.

Flutters of snow came aimless upon flaws.

“Lock up your paints,” the mate said,
speaking light,

“This is the Horn; you’ll join my watch
to-night.”

V

All through the windless night the clipper
rolled

In a great swell with oily gradual heaves

Which rolled her down until her time-bells
tollèd

Clang, and the weltering water moaned like
beeves.

The thundering rattle of slatting shook the
sheaves,

Startles of water made the swing ports
gush,

The sea was moaning and sighing and say-
ing "Hush!"

It was all black and starless. Peering
down

Into the water trying to pierce the gloom,
One saw a dim, smooth, oily glitter of
brown

Heaving and dying away and leaving room
For yet another. Like the march of doom
Came those great powers of marching
silences;

Then fog came down, dead cold, and hid
the seas.

They set the Dauber to the fog-horn.

There

He stood upon the poop, making to sound
Out of the pump the sailors' nasal blare,
Listening lest ice should make the note re-
sound.

She bayed there like a solitary hound
Lost in a covert, all the watch she bayed;
The fog, come closelier down, no answer
made.

Denser it grew, until the ship was lost;
The elemental hid her, she was merged
In mufflings of dark death, like a man's
ghost
New to the change of death, yet thither
urged.

Then from the hidden waters something
surged

Mournful, despairing, great, greater than
speech,

A noise like one slow wave on a still beach.

Mournful, and then again, mournful, and
still

Out of the night that mighty voice arose,
The Dauber at his fog-horn felt the thrill:
Who rode that desolate sea? What forms
were those?

Mournful, from things defeated, in the
throes

Of memory of some conquered hunting
ground,

Out of the night of death arose the sound.

“Whales,” said the mate. They stayed
there all night long,

Answering the horn, out of the night they
spoke,

Defeated creatures who had suffered wrong
But were still noble underneath the stroke.
They filled the darkness when the Dauber
woke ;

The men came peering to the rail to hear
And the sea sighed and the fog rose up
sheer,

A wall of nothing at the world's last edge,
Where no life came except defeated life.
The Dauber felt shut in within a hedge
Behind which form was hidden and thought
was rife,

And that a blinding flash, a thrust, a knife,
Would sweep the hedge away and make all
plain,

Brilliant beyond all words, blinding the
brain.

So the night passed, but then no morning
broke,

Only a something showed that night was
dead,

A sea bird, cackling like a devil, spoke,
And the fog drew away and hung like
lead :

Like mighty cliffs it shaped, sullen and
red,

Like glowering gods at watch it did
appear,

And sometimes drew away and then drew
near,

Like islands and like chasms and like hell,
But always mighty and red, gloomy and
ruddy,

Shutting the visible sea in like a well,
Slow-heaving in vast ripples blank and
muddy,

Where the sun should have risen it streaked
bloody ;

The day was still-born ; all the sea-fowl
scattering

Splashed the still water, mewing, hovering,
clattering.

Then Polar snow came down little and light,
Till all the sky was hidden by the small,
Most multitudinous drift of dirty white
Tumbling and wavering down and 'covering
all,

Covering the sky, the sea, the clipper tall,
Furring the ropes with white, casing the
mast,

Coming on no known air, but blowing past.

And all the air seemed full of gradual moan,
As though in those cloud-chasms the horns
were blowing

The mort for gods cast out and over-
thrown,

Or for the eyeless sun plucked out and
going.

Slow the slow gradual moan came in the
snowing,

The Dauber felt the prelude had begun.

The snowstorm fluttered by, he saw the
sun

Show and pass by, gleam from one towering
prism

Into another, vaster and more grim,

Which in dull crags of darkness had arisen

To muffle-to a final door on him;

The gods upon the dull crags lowered dim,

The pigeons chattered, quarrelling in the
track.

In the southwest the dimness dulled to
black.

Then came the cry of: "Call all hands on
deck."

The Dauber knew its meaning; it was
come:

Cape Horn, that tramples beauty into wreck
And crumples steel and smites the strong
man dumb.

Down clattered flying kites and staysails:
some

Sang out in quick, high calls; the fairleads
skirled,

And from the southwest came the end of
the world.

"Caught in her ball dress," said the bosun,
hauling.

"Lee-ay, lee-ay!" quick, high, came the
men's call,

It was all wallop of sails and startled call-
ing:

“Let fly,” “Let go,” “Clue up,” and “Let
go all,”

“Now up and make them fast.” “Here,
give us a haul,”

“Now up and stow them. Quick! By
God, we’re done.”

The blackness crunched all memory of the
sun.

“Up,” said the mate. “Mizen topgallants.
Hurry!”

The Dauber ran, the others ran, the
sails

Slatted and shook; out of the black a
flurry,

Whirled in fine lines tattering the edge to
trails;

Painting and art and England were old
tales

Told in some other life to that pale man

Who struggled with white fear and gulped
and ran.

He struck a ringbolt in his haste and fell,
Rose, sick with pain, half-lamed in his left
knee

He reached the shrouds, where clambering
men pell-mell

Hustled each other up and cursed him; he
Hurried aloft with them: then from the
sea

Came a cold, sudden breath that made the
hair

Stiff on the neck as though Death whis-
pered there.

A man below him punched him in the
side:

“Get up you, Dauber, or let me get
past.”

He saw the belly of the skysail skied,
Gulped, and clutched tight, and tried to go
more fast ;
Sometimes he missed his ratline and was
grassed,
Scraped his shin raw against the rigid line ;
The clamberers reached the futtock-shrouds'
incline.

Cursing they came ; one, kicking out be-
hind,
Kicked Dauber in the mouth, and one below
Punched at his calves ; the futtock-shrouds
inclined —

It was a perilous path for one to go.
“Up, Dauber, up !” a curse followed a blow ;
He reached the top and gasped, then on,
then on.
And one voice yelled “Let go !” and one
“All gone !”

Fierce clamberers, some in oilskins, some in
rags,

Hustling and hurrying up, up the steep
stairs,

Before the windless sails were blown to flags
And whirled like dirty birds athwart great
airs,

Ten men in all, to get this mast of theirs
Snugged to the gale in time. "Up, damn
you, run!"

The mizen topmast head was safely won.

"Lay out!" the bosun yelled: the Dauber
laid

Out on the yard, gripping the yard, and
feeling

Sick at the mighty space of air displayed
Below his feet, where mewing birds were
wheeling;

A giddy fear was on him, he was reeling,

He bit his lip half through, clutching the
jack;

A cold sweat glued the shirt upon his
back.

The yard shook to men's feet, a brace was
loose,

He felt that he would fall, he bent, he
bent,

Clammy with natural terror to the
shoes,

While idiotic promptings came and went.

Then the great soul of his serene intent

Came winging warm upon him, like new
blood,

Tingling each nerve, making each channel
good.

To unknown strength, the shock passed, he
could look

Forward, where, on the main, the skysail
high,

Though now half smothered, kicked aloft
and shook

Over the straining heads of Sam and Si.

A whirl of pellets of little snow drove by.

He saw the water darken. Someone yelled :

“Frap it ! don’t stay to furl. Hold on !”

He held.

Darkness came down, half darkness, in a
whirl ;

The sky went out, the waters disappeared.

He felt a shocking pressure of blowing hurl

The ship upon her side ; the darkness
speared

At her with wind, she staggered, she
careered,

Then down she lay, the Dauber felt her
go,

He saw his yard tilt downwards ; then the
snow

Whirled all about, dense, multitudinous,
cold,

Mixed with the wind's one devilish thrust
and shriek

Which whiffled out men's tears, deafened,
took hold,

Flattening the flying drift against the cheek.

The yards buckled and bent, man could not
speak ;

The ship lay on her side and the wind's
sound

Had devilish malice at having got her
downed.

At the first shock of falling Dauber's feet
Slid on the rope ; he slid, gripping the jack,
Till one foot jammed against an iron sheet,

And the iron cap of the topmast propped
his back,

Then passed a minute of roaring, whirling
black.

His mate upon the yard yelled in his ear
“Sail. Cut away. Cut rags.” He could
not hear.

“Cut!” yelled his mate; he looked, the
sail was gone,

Blown into rags in the first furious squall.
The tatters drummed the devil’s tattoo; on
The buckling yard a block thumped like
a mall.

The ship lay, the sea smote her, the wind’s
bawl

Came ’Loo, ’Loo, ’Loo; the Devil cried
his hounds

On to the poor spent stag strayed in his
bounds.

“Cut! Ease her!” yelled his mate; the
Dauber heard.

His mate wormed up the tilted yard and
slashed,

A rag of canvas skimmed like a darting
bird.

The snow whirled, the ship bowed to it,
the gear lashed;

The Dauber left his perch, his sheath
knife flashed,

His numb hand hacked with it, to clear the
strips;

The flying ice was salt upon his lips.

The ice was caking on his oilskins; cold
Struck to his marrow, beat upon him,
stung.

The chill palsied his blood, it made him old;
The frosty scatter of death was being flung.
And still the ship lay over, still he clung,

Tatters of shouts were flung, the rags of
yells

And clang, clang, clang, below beat the two
bells.

Numb with the agony of the cold, he
looked

Above him at the royal; there he saw
The bony finger of the lean spar crooked,
Bending to leeward like a clutching claw.
The mast's heel, working, ground its fid-
hole raw,

Royal and skysail beat in tatters: boys
Hacked at the rags, and "slat, slat, slat,"
the noise

Of their frayed, flapping trouser-ends beat,
beat,

Beat in the wind, and still they hacked;
and he

Hacked on the jerking yard half off his
feet,

Cutting the scattering rags and tatters free.
They tied themselves in knots, they had
such glee

To kick away their masters and to lose
The iron bonds of their constraining clews.

They cleared the weather-yard. "Now!"
yelled his mate,

"Go down to leeward and cut away the
rest."

Slide down the tilted pole, wrestle with
fate.

Held by the oilskin buttons on his chest,
The Dauber's turn was come: he did his
best,

Slid down and cut away. He felt his foot
Plucked from below; the bosun shook his
boot.

“Leave that,” the bosun shouted. “Cro-
jick save.”

The splitting crojick, not yet gone to
rags,

Thundered below, beating till something
gave.

Bellying between its buntlines into bags.
Some birds were blown past shrieking:
dark, like shags,

Their backs seemed, looking down. “’Leu,
’Leu!” they cried.

The ship lay, the seas thumped her, she had
died.

They reached the crojick yard, which
buckled, buckled

Like a thin whalebone to the topsail’s
strain ;

They laid upon the yard and heaved and
knuckled,

Pounding the sail, which jangled and leapt
again.

It was quite hard with ice, its rope like
chain,

Its strength like seven devils, it shook the
mast ;

They cursed and toiled and froze : a long
time passed.

Two hours passed, then a dim lightening
came.

Those frozen ones upon the yard could see
The mainsail and the foresail still the
same,

Still battling with the hands and blowing
free,

Rags blew where kites and staysails used
to be ;

The lower topsails stood ; the ship's lea
deck

Creamed with four feet of water filled with
wreck.

An hour more went by; the Dauber lost
All sense of hands and feet, all sense of all
But of a wind that cut him to the ghost
And of a frozen fold he had to haul,
Of heavens that fell and never ceased to
fall

And ran in smoky snatches along the sea,
Leaping from crest to wave-crest, yelling:
he

Lost sense of time, no bells went, but he
felt

Ages go over him. At last, at last
They frapped the cringled crojick's icy
pelt;

In frozen bulge and bunt they made it fast.
Then, scarcely live, they laid in to the mast.

The captain's speaking trumpet gave a
blare:

"Make fast the topsail, Mister, while you're
there."

Some seamen cursed, but up they had to
go,

Up to the topsail yard to spend an hour
Stowing a topsail in a blinding snow

Which made the strongest man among
them cower.

More men came up, the fresh hands gave
them power,

They stowed the sail; then with a rattle
of chain

One half the crojick burst its bonds again.

* * * * *

They stowed the sail, frapping it round
with rope,

Leaving no surface for the wind, no fold;

Then down the weather shrouds, half dead,
they grope.

That struggle with the sail had made them
old ;

They wondered if the crojick furl would
hold.

“Lucky,” said one, “she didn’t lose a
spar.”

“Lucky,” the bosun said, “lucky? We
are.

“She came within two shakes of turning
top,

Or stripping all her shroud screws, that
first quiff.

Now, fish those wash-deck buckets out of
the slop.

Here’s Dauber says he doesn’t like Cape
Stiff.

This isn’t wind, man, this is only a whiff.

Hold on, all hands; hold on!" a sea, half-
seen

Paused, mounted, burst and filled the main
deck green.

The Dauber felt a mountain of water fall.
It covered him deep, deep, he felt it fill
Over his head, the deck, the fife-rails all,
Quieting the ship, she trembled and lay
still.

Then with a rush and shatter and clanging
shrill,

Over she went; he saw the water cream
Over the bitts; he saw the half-deck
stream.

Then in the rush he swirled, over she
went,

Her lee rail dipped, he struck, and some-
thing gave.

His legs went through a port as the roll
spent ;

She paused, then rolled, and back the water
drave,

He drifted with it as a part of the wave ;
Half-drowned, half-stunned, exhausted,
partly frozen,

He struck the booby hatchway ; then the
bosun

Leaped, seeing his chance, before the next
sea burst

And caught him as he drifted, seized him,
held,

Up-ended him against the bitts and cursed.

“This ain’t the George’s Swimming Baths,”
he yelled,

“Keep on your feet,” another gray-back
felled

The two together, and the bose, half-blind,

Spat: "One's a joke," he cursed, "but
two's unkind."

"Now, damn it, Dauber," said the mate,
"look out,
Or you'll be over the side." The water
freed,
Each clanging freeing-port became a
spout.
The men cleared up the decks, as there
was need ;
The Dauber coiled up with them, feeling
bleed
His head into his oilskins; the sky glow-
ered,
The wind shrieked, and the mile-long gray-
backs towered.

It was fast darkening, but the ship was
saved,

She was snugged down, though fourteen
sails were split.

Out of the dark a fiercer fury raved :

The gray-backs died and mounted, each
crest lit

With a white toppling gleam that hissed
from it

And slid, or leaped, or ran with whirls of
cloud,

Mad with inhuman life that shrieked
aloud.

The watch was called : Dauber might go
below.

“Splice the main brace,” the mate called ;
all laid aft

To get a gulp of momentary glow

As some reward for having saved the craft.

The steward ladled mugs from which each
quaffed

Whisky, with water, sugar and lime juice,
hot,

A quarter of a pint each made the tot.

Beside the lamp-room door the steward
stood

Ladling it out, and each man came in turn,
Tipped his sou'wester, drank it, grunted
"Good,"

And shambled forward, letting it slowly
burn.

When all were gone the Dauber lagged
astern,

Torn by his frozen body's lust for heat,
The liquor's pleasant smell, so warm, so
sweet,

And by a promise long-since made at
home

Never to taste strong liquor; now he knew

The worth of liquor, now he wanted some;
His frozen body urged him to the brew.

Yet it seemed wrong, an evil thing to do
To break that promise. "Dauber," said
the mate,

"Drink and turn in, man; why the hell
d'ye wait?"

"Please, sir, I'm temperance." "Temper-
ance are you, hey?"

That's all the more for me; so you're for
slops?

I thought you'd had enough slops for to-
day.

Go to your bunk and ease her when she
drops.

And . . . dammy, steward, you brew with
too much hops. . . .

Stir up the sugar, man . . . and tell your
girl

How kind the mate was teaching you to
furl."

Then the mate drank the remnants, six
men's share,

And ramped into his cabin, where he
stripped

And danced unclad and was uproarious
there.

In waltzes with the cabin-cat he tripped,
Singing in tenor clear that he was pipped,
That "he who strove the tempest to dis-
arm

Must never first embrail the lee yard-
arm,"

And that his name was Ginger. Dauber
crept

Back to the roundhouse, gripping by the
rail.

The wind howled by, the passionate water
leapt,

The night was all one roaring with the
gale.

Then at the door he stopped, uttering a
wail,

His hands were perished numb and blue as
veins,

He could not turn the knob for both the
Spains.

A hand came shuffling aft, dodging the
seas,

Singing "Her nut brown hair" between
his teeth,

Taking the ocean's tumult at his ease,
Even when the wash about his thighs did
seethe.

His soul was happy in its happy
sheath:

“What, Dauber, won’t it open? Fingers
cold?”

You’ll talk of this time, Dauber, when
you’re old.”

He flung the door half-open, and a sea
Washed them both in, over the splash-
board, down.

“You silly salt miscarriage,” spluttered he.

“Dauber, pull out the plug before we
drown.

That’s spoiled my laces and my velvet
gown.

Where is the plug?” groping in pitch dark
water

He sang between his teeth “The farmer’s
daughter.”

It was pitch dark within there, at each
roll

The chests slid to the slant, the water
rushed,

Making full many a clanging tin pan bowl
Into the black below-bunks as it gushed.
The dog-tired men slept through it, they
were hushed.

The water drained, and then with matches
damp

The man struck heads off till he lit the
lamp.

“Thank you,” the Dauber said ; the seaman
grinned.

“This is your first foul weather?” “Yes.”

“I thought

Up on the yard you hadn’t seen much wind.
Them’s rotten sea boots, Dauber, that you
brought.

Now I must cut on deck before I’m
caught.”

He went, the lamp-flame smoked, he
slammed the door;

A film of water loitered across the floor.

The Dauber watched it come, and watched
it go.

He had had a revelation of the lies
Cloaking the truth men never choose to know;
He could bear witness now and cleanse their
eyes.

He had beheld in suffering, he was wise.
This was the sea, this searcher of the soul,
This never-dying shriek fresh from the
Pole.

He shook with cold, his hands could not
undo

His oilskin buttons, so he shook and sat
Watching his dirty fingers, dirty blue,
Hearing without the hammering tackle slat.

Within, the drops from dripping clothes
went pat,
Running in little patters, gentle, sweet,
And "Ai, Ai," went the wind, and the seas
beat.

His bunk was sopping wet, he clambered
in,
None of his clothes were dry: his fear re-
curred.

Cramps bunched the muscles underneath
his skin,
The great ship rolled until the lamp was
blurred.

He took his Bible and tried to read a
word,
Trembled at going aloft again, and
then
Resolved to fight it out and show it to
men.

Faces recurred, fierce memories of the yard,
The look of the sail, the savage eyes, the
 jests,

The oaths of one great seaman, syphilis-
 scarred,

The tug of the leeches jammed beneath
 their chests,

The buntlines bellying bunts out into
 breasts.

The deck so desolate-grey, the sky so wild.
He fell asleep and slept like a young child.

But not for long: the cold awoke him soon,
The hot-ache and the skin-cracks and the
 cramp,

The seas thundering without, the gale's
 wild tune,

The sopping misery of the blankets damp:
A speaking-trumpet roared, a seaboot's
 stamp

Clogged at the door, a man entered to shout,
“All hands on deck ! Arouse here ! Tumble
out !”

The caller raised the lamp ; his oilskins
clicked

As the thin ice upon them cracked and fell.
“Rouse out,” he said. “This lamp is
frozen wicked.

Rouse out,” his accent deepened to a yell.
“We’re among ice ; it’s blowing up like
hell ;
We’re going to hand both topsails. Time,
I guess,
We’re sheeted up. Rouse out. Don’t stay
to dress.”

“Is it cold on deck ?” said Dauber. “Is
it cold ?

We’re sheeted up, I tell you, inches thick ;

The fo'c's'le's like a wedding-cake, I'm told ;
Now tumble out, my sons ; on deck here ;
quick.

Rouse out, away, and come and climb the
stick :

I'm going to call the half-deck. Bosun.
Hey.

Both topsails coming in. Heave out.
Away."

He went ; the Dauber tumbled from his
bunk,

Clutching the side ; he heard the wind go
past,

Making the great ship wallow as if drunk.

There was a shocking tumult up the mast.

"This is the end," he muttered, "come at
last ;

I've got to go aloft, facing this cold.

I can't. I can't. I'll never keep my hold.

“I cannot face the topsail yard again.

I never guessed what misery it would
be.”

The cramps and hot-ache made him sick
with pain.

The ship stopped suddenly from a devilish
sea,

Then with a triumph of wash, a rush of
glee,

The door burst in, and in the water rolled,
Filling the lower bunks, black, creaming,
cold.

The lamp sucked out, “wash” went the
water back,

Then in again, flooding; the bosun swore.

“You useless thing, you Dauber, you lee
slack,

Get out, you heekapoota; shut the door.

You coo-ilyaira, what are you waiting for?

Out of my way, you thing, you useless
thing."

He slammed the door indignant, clanging
the ring.

And then he lit the lamp, drowned to the
waist.

"Here's a fine house. Get at the scupper
holes."

He bent against it as the water raced.

"And pull them out to leeward when she
rolls ;

They say some kinds of landsmen don't
have souls.

I well believe. A Port Mahon baboon

Would make more soul than you got with
a spoon."

Down in the icy water Dauber groped

To find the plug ; the racing water sluiced

Over his head and shoulders as she sloped.
Without, judged by the sound, all hell was
loosed.

He felt cold Death about him tightly noosed,
That Death was better than the misery
there,
Iced on the quaking foothold high in air.

And then the thought came: "I'm a failure.

All

My life has been a failure: they were right.
It will not matter if I go and fall;
I should be free, then, from this hell's de-
light.

I'll never paint. Best let it end to-night.
I'll slip over the side. I've tried and failed."
So, in the ice-cold, in the night, he quailed.

Death would be better, Death, than this
long hell

Of mockery and surrender and dismay,
This long defeat of doing nothing well,
Playing the part too high for him to play.
“O Death, who hides the sorry thing away,
Take me, I’ve failed. I cannot play these
cards.”

There came a thundering from the topsail
yards.

And then he bit his lips, clenching his
mind,
And staggered out to muster, beating back
The coward frozen self of him that
whined.

Come what cards might, he meant to play
the pack.

“Ai!” screamed the wind, the topsail sheets
went clack,

Ice filled the air with spikes, the gray-backs
burst.

“Here’s Dauber,” said the mate, “on deck
the first.

“Why, holy sailor, Dauber, you’re a man ;
I took you for a soldier ; up now, come.”
Up on the yards already they began
That battle with a gale which strikes men
dumb.

The leaping topsail thundered like a drum,
The frozen snow beat in the face like shots.
The wind spun whipping wave-crests into
clots.

So up, upon the topsail yard again,
In the great tempest’s fiercest hour, began
Probation to the Dauber’s soul of pain
Which crowds a century’s torment in a
span.

For the next month the ocean taught this
man,

And he, in that month's torment, while she
 wested,
Was never warm, nor dry, nor full, nor
 rested.

But still it blew, or, if it lulled, it rose
Within the hour and blew again; and still
The water as it burst aboard her froze.
The wind blew off an ice-field, raw and
 chill,
Daunting man's body, tampering with his
 will;
But after thirty days a ghostly sun
Gave sickly promise that the storms were
 done.

VI

A great grey sea was running up the sky;
Desolate birds flew past, their mewings came
As that lone water's spiritual cry,

Its forlorn voice, its essence, its soul's name.
The ship limped in the water as if lame.
Then in the forenoon watch to a great shout
More sail was made, the reefs were shaken
out,

A slant came from the south; the singers
stood

Clapped to the halliards, hauling to a tune,
Old as the sea, a fillip to the blood,
While the upper topsail rose like a balloon.
"So long, Cape Stiff. In Valparaiso soon,"
Said one to other as the ship lay over,
Making her course again, again a rover.

All felt Cape Horn was ended, all men's
hearts

Lightened, and all men sang, so fair, so sweet
Showed the half sunny heaven, blue in parts,
After the month-long drive of Polar sheets;

They sang "King Louis," hauling aft the
sheets ;

Fo'c's'le and half-deck sang, the ship was
ringing

With snatches of old songs and seamen
singing.

Slowly the sea went down as the wind
dropped ;

Clear rang the songs, "Hurrah, Cape Horn
is bet."

And some hung clothes to dry and others
mopped

The filthy deckings, slimp with long wet,
Where, mouldered over, tattered, gone to
fret,

Old clothes appeared, old, drowned, forgotten
things,

Washed under bunks and soaked to ravel-
lings.

The Dauber, scrubbing out the roundhouse,
found

Old pantiles gone to pulp, old clouts, old
gear

In the below-bunks blackness long since
drowned

During the agony of the Cape Horn year.
He sang in scrubbing, for he had done with
fear ;

He had endured the worst, he had passed
through ;

He thought of all the pictures he would do

On the immense scale of the sailor's stage :
The yard, the ship, the sea, the power of
man

Matched against chaos in elemental rage,
The way of the wind upon the waters wan.
The pelting off the Horn had given him
tan,

Brightened his eyes and plumped him, arms
and face ;

He had got manhood at the testing place.

Singing he scrubbed, passing his watch
below,

Making the roundhouse fair ; the bosun
watched,

Bringing his knitting slowly to the toe ;

Sails stretched a mizen skysail which he
patched ;

They thought the Dauber was a bad egg
hatched.

“Daubs,” said the bosun cheerly, “can
you knit ?

I’ve made a Barney’s bull of this last bit.”

Then, while the Dauber counted, bosun took
Some marline from his pocket. “Here,” he
said,

“You want to know square sennit? So
fash. Look.

Eight foxes take, and stop the ends with
thread;

I’ve known an engineer would give his head
To know square sennit.” As the bose
began

The Dauber felt promoted into man.

It was his warrant that he had not failed,
That the most hard peak in his difficult
climb

Had not been past attainment; it was
scaled,

In spite of perilous ways and slippery
slime.

He had emerged out of the iron time
And knew that he could compass his life’s
scheme;

He had the power sufficient to his dream.

Then dinner came, and now the sky was
blue.

The ship was standing north, the Horn was
rounded ;

She made a thundering as she weltered
through.

The mighty gray-backs glittered as she
bounded.

More sail was piled upon her : she was
hounded

North, while the wind came ; like a stag she
ran

Over grey hills and hollows of seas wan.

She had a white bone in her mouth : she
sped ;

Those in the roundhouse watched her as
they ate

Their meal of pork-fat fried with broken
bread ;

“Good old,” they cried, “she’s off, she’s
gathering gait.”

Her track was whitening like a Lammas
spate.

“Good old,” they cried, “oh, give her cloth.
Hurray

For three weeks more to Valparaiso Bay.”

“She smells old Vallipo,” the bosun cried,
“We’ll be inside the tier in three weeks
more,

Lying at double-moorings where they ride
Off of the Market, half a mile from shore,
And bumboat pan, my sons, and figs galore,
And girls in black mantillas fit to make a
Poor seaman frantic when they dance the
cueca.

“Now, Daubs, stand by to smart her up
for port,

Rouse out your paints, this clipper needs
some brightening.

No afternoons below now days are short,
But all hands holystoning her and whiten-
ing

And making all her brass as bright as light-
ning.

She's a crack ship, this hooker; smartened
up,

She'll queen the tier and win the Consul's
cup."

Eight bells were made, the watch was
changed, and now

The mate spoke to the Dauber, "This is
better.

We'll soon be getting mudhooks over the
bow.

She'll make her passage still if this'll let
her.

O, run, you drogher, dip your fo'c's'le
wetter.

Well, Dauber, this is better than Cape
Horn.

Them topsails made you wish you'd not
been born."

"Yes, sir," the Dauber said. "Now," said
the mate,

"We've got to smart her up. Them Cape
Horn seas

Have made her paintwork like a rusty grate.
O, didn't them topsails make your fish-
hooks freeze?

A topsail don't pay heed to 'won't you,
please?'

Well. And you've seen Cape Horn, Dauber;
you've learned.

You've dipped your hand and had your
fingers burned.

“And now you’ll stow that folly, trying to
paint;

You’ve had your lesson; you’re a sailor,
now.

You come on board a woman ready to
faint.

All sorts of slush you’d learned, the Lord
knows how.

Well, Cape Horn’s sent you wisdom over
the bow.

If you’ve got sense to take it. You’re a
sailor.

My God, before, you were a woman’s
tailor.

“So throw your paints to blazes and have
done.

Words can’t describe the silly things you
did,

Sitting before your easel in the sun,

With all your colours on the paint-box
lid.

I blushed for you . . . and then the daubs
you hid.

My God ! you'll have more sense now, eh ?
You've quit ?"

"No, sir." "You've not?" "No, sir."
"God give you wit.

"I thought you'd come to wisdom."

Thus they talked

While the great clipper took her bit and
rushed

Like a skin-glistening stallion not yet
balked,

Till fire-bright water at her swingports
gushed ;

Poising and bowing down her forefoot
crushed

Bubble on glittering bubble ; on she went.

The Dauber watched her, wondering what
it meant

To come, after long months, at rosy dawn,
Into the placid blue of some great bay,
Treading the quiet water like a fawn
Ere yet the morning haze was blown away,
A rose-flushed figure putting aside the
grey,

And anchoring there before the city smoke
Rose, or the church-bells rang, or men
awoke.

And then, in the first light, to see grow
clear

That long-expected haven filled with
strangers,

Alive with men and women; see and hear
Its clattering market and its money-
changers;

And hear the surf beat, and be free from
dangers,

And watch the crinkled ocean blue with
calm

Drowsing beneath the Trade, beneath the
palm.

Hungry for that he worked; the hour went
by

And still the wind grew, still the clipper
strode;

And now a darkness hid the western
sky,

And sprays came flicking off at the wind's
goad.

She stumbled now, feeling her sail a load.

The mate gazed hard to windward, eyed his
sail,

And said the Horn was going to flick her
tail.

Boldly he kept it on her till she staggered,
But still the wind increased; it grew, it
grew,

Darkening the sky, making the water haggard;
Full of small snow the mighty wester blew.

“More fun for little fish-hooks,” sighed the
crew.

They eyed the taut topgallants stiff like
steel;

A second hand was ordered to the wheel.

The captain eyed her aft, sucking his lip,
Feeling the sail too much, but yet refrain-
ing

From putting hobbles on the leaping ship,
The glad sea-shattering stallion, halter
straining,

Wind-musical, uproarious and complaining:
But, in a gust, he cocked his finger, so:

“You’d better take them off, before they go.”

All saw. They ran at once without the word.

“Leeay, Leeay!” loud rang the clewline cries.

Sam in his bunk within the half-deck heard,

Stirred in his sleep and rubbed his drowsy eyes.

“There go the lower to’gallants.” Against the skies

Rose the thin bellying strips of leaping sail.

The Dauber was the first man over the rail.

Three to a mast they ran; it was a race.

“God,” said the mate, “that Dauber, he can go.”

He watched the runners with an upturned
face,

Over the futtocks struggling heel to toe,
Up to the topmast cross trees into the
blow,

Where the three sails were leaping.
“Dauber wins.”

The yards were reached and now the race
begins.

Which three will furl their sail first and
come down?

Out to the yard-arm for the leech goes one,
His hair blowing flagwise from a hatless
crown,

His hands at work like fever to be done.

Out of the gale a fiercer fury spun.

The three sails leaped together, yanking
high,

Like talons darting up to clutch the sky.

The Dauber on the fore topgallant yard
Was at the weather-arm; he was the first
To wrestle with the canvas bellying hard,
Bulged by the shrieking wester's bitter
burst.

He got his leech in, while a comrade cursed
The lead of the buntlines and, with oaths,
observed :

"The eye of the outer jib-stay isn't served."

"No?" said the Dauber. "No," the man
replied.

They heaved, stowing the sail, not looking
round,

Panting, but full of life and eager-eyed;
The gale roared at them with its iron sound.

"That's you," the Dauber said. His gas-
ket wound

Swift round the yard, binding the sail in
bands.

There came a gust, the sail leaped from his
hands

So that he saw it high above him, grey,
And there his mate was falling; quick he
clutched

An arm in oilskins swiftly snatched away.
A voice said "Christ!" a quick shape
stooped and touched,

Chain struck his hands, ropes shot, the sky
was smutched

With vast black fires that ran, that fell,
that furled,

And then he saw the mast, the small snow
hurled,

The fore topgallant yard far, far aloft,
And blankness settling on him and great
pain,

And snow beneath his fingers wet and soft,

And topsail-sheet-blocks shaking at the
chain.

He knew it was he who had fallen; then
his brain

Swirled in a circle while he watched the
sky.

Infinite multitudes of snow blew by.

“I thought it was Tom who fell,” his
brain’s voice said.

“Down on the bloody deck,” the captain
screamed.

The multitudinous little snowflakes sped.
His pain was real enough, but all else
seemed.

Si with a bucket ran, the water gleamed,
Tilting upon him, others came, the
mate . . .

They knelt with eager eyes like things that
wait

For other things to come. He saw them
there.

“It will go on,” he murmured, watching
Si.

Colours and sounds seemed mixing in the
air.

The pain was stunning him and the wind
went by.

“More water,” said the mate. “Here,
bosun; try,

Ask if he’s got a message. Hell! he’s gone.
Here, Dauber, Paints.” He said, “It will
go on.”

Not knowing his meaning rightly, but he
spoke

With the intenseness of a fading soul
Whose share of nature’s fire turns to smoke,
Whose hand on nature’s wheel loses control.
The eager faces glowered red like coal;

They glowed, the great storm glowed, the
sails, the mast.

“It will go on,” he cried aloud, and passed.

Those from the yard came down to tell
the tale.

“He almost had me off,” said Tom. “He
slipped.

There come one hell-of-a jump-like from
the sail.

He clutched at me and almost had me
pipped.

He caught my 'ris'band, but the oilskin
ripped.

It tore clean off. Look here. I was near
gone.

I made a grab to catch him; so did John.

“I caught his arm. My God, I was near
done.

He almost had me over: it was near.

He hit the ropes and grabbed at every
one."

"Well," said the mate, "we cannot leave
him here.

Run, Si, and get the half-deck table clear;
We'll lay him there. Catch hold there,
you, and you.

He's dead, poor son, there's nothing more
to do."

Night fell, and all night long the Dauber
lay

Covered upon the table; all night long
The pitiless storm exulted at her prey,
Huddling the waters with her icy thong.
But to the covered shape she did no wrong;
He lay under the sailcloth. Bell by bell
The night wore through; the stars rose,
the stars fell.

Blowing most pitiless cold out of clear
sky,

The wind roared all night long; and all
night through

The green seas on the deck went washing
by,

Flooding the half-deck; bitter hard it blew.

But little of it all the Dauber knew :

The sopping bunks, the floating chests, the
wet,

The darkness and the misery and the
sweat.

He was off duty. So it blew all night,
And when the watches changed the men
would come,

Dripping within the door to strike a light
And stare upon the Dauber lying dumb,
And say, "He come a cruel thump, poor
chum."

Or "He'd a been a fine big man," or

"He . . .

A smart young seaman he was getting to
be."

Or, "Damn it all, it's what we've all to
face. . . .

I knew another fellow one time . . ." then
Came a strange tale of death in a strange
place

Out on the sea, in ships, with wandering
men.

In many ways Death puts us into pen.
The reefers came down tired and looked
and slept.

Below the skylight little dribbles crept

Along the painted woodwork, glistening,
slow,

Following the roll and dripping, never fast,

But dripping on the quiet form below
Like passing time talking to time long
past.

And all night long "Ai! Ai!" went the
wind's blast,

And creaming water swished below the pale
Unheeding body stretched below the sail.

At dawn they sewed him up, and at eight
bells

They bore him to the gangway, wading
deep,

Through the green-clutching, white-toothed
water-hells

That flung his carriers over in their sweep.
They laid an old red ensign on the heap,
And all hands stood bareheaded, stooping,
swaying,

Washed by the sea, while the old man was
praying

Out of a borrowed prayer-book. At a
sign

They twitched the ensign back and tipped
the grating :

A creamier bubbling broke the bubbling
brine,

The muffled figure tilted to the weight-
ing,

It dwindled slowly down, slowly gyrating ;
Some craned to see, it dimmed, it disap-
peared,

The last green milky bubble blinked and
cleared.

“Mister, shake out your reefs,” the captain
called.

“Out topsail reefs,” the mate cried ; then
all hands

Hurried, the great sails shook, and all hands
hauled,

Singing that desolate song of lonely lands,
Of the drowned lover come in dripping
bands,
Green with the wet and cold, to tell his
lover
That Death was in the sea and all was
over.

Fair came the falling wind; a seaman
said

The Dauber was a Jonah; once again
The clipper held her course, showing red
lead,
Shattering the sea tops into golden rain;
The waves bowed down before her like
blown grain.

Onwards she thundered, on; her voyage
was short,
Before the tier's bells rang her into
port.

Cheerily they rang her in, those beating
bells,

The new-come beauty stately from the
sea,

Whitening the blue heave of the drowsy
swells,

Treading the bubbles down: with three
times three

They cheered her moving beauty in; and
she

Came to her berth, so noble, so superb,
Swayed like a queen and answered to the
curb.

Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour
When the light gentles and the wind is soft,
And beauty in the heart breaks like a
flower.

Working aloft they saw the mountain tower

Snow to the peak ; they heard the launch-
men shout ;

And bright along the bay the lights came
out.

And then the night fell dark, and all night
long

The pointed mountain pointed at the stars,
Frozen, alert, austere ; the eagle's song
Screamed from her desolate screes and
splintered scars.

On her intense crags, where the air is
sparse,

The stars looked down, their many golden
eyes

Watched her and burned, burned out, and
came to rise.

Silent the finger of the summit stood,
Icy in pure, thin air, glittering with snows ;

Then the sun's coming turned the peak to
blood,

And in the resthouse the muleteers arose.

And all day long, where only the eagle goes,

Stones, loosened by the sun, fall: the stones
falling

Fill empty gorge on gorge with echoes call-
ing.

BIOGRAPHY

WHEN I am buried, all my thoughts and acts
Will be reduced to lists of dates and facts,
And long before this wandering flesh is
rotten

The dates which made me will be all for-
gotten ;

And none will know the gleam there used
to be

About the feast days freshly kept by me,
But men will call the golden hour of bliss
“About this time,” or “shortly after this.”

Men do not heed the rungs by which men
climb

Those glittering steps, those milestones upon
Time,

Those tombstones of dead selves, those
 hours of birth,
Those moments of the soul in years of earth
They mark the height achieved, the main
 result,
The power of freedom in the perished cult,
The power of boredom in the dead man's
 deeds,
Not the bright moments of the sprinkled
 seeds.

By many waters and on many ways
I have known golden instants and bright
 days ;
The day on which, beneath an arching sail,
I saw the Cordilleras and gave hail ;
The summer day on which in heart's delight
I saw the Swansea Mumbles bursting white,
The glittering day when all the waves wore
 flags

And the ship *Wanderer* came with sails in
rags ;

That curlew-calling time in Irish dusk
When life became more splendid than its
husk,

When the rent chapel on the brae at Slains
Shone with a doorway opening beyond
brains ;

The dawn when, with a brace-block's creak-
ing cry,

Out of the mist a little barque slipped by,
Spilling the mist with changing gleams of
red,

Then gone, with one raised hand and one
turned head ;

The howling evening when the spindrift's
mists

Broke to display the four Evangelists,
Snow-capped, divinely granite, lashed by
breakers,

Wind-beaten bones of long since buried
acres ;

The night alone near water when I heard
All the sea's spirit spoken by a bird ;

The English dusk when I beheld once more
(With eyes so changed) the ship, the citted
shore,

The lines of masts, the streets so cheerly
trod

(In happier seasons) and gave thanks to
God.

All had their beauty, their bright moments'
gift,

Their something caught from Time, the
ever-swift.

All of those gleams were golden ; but life's
hands

Have given more constant gifts in changing
lands,

And when I count those gifts, I think them
such

As no man's bounty could have bettered
much:

The gift of country life, near hills and
woods

Where happy waters sing in solitudes,
The gift of being near ships, of seeing each
day

A city of ships with great ships under
weigh,

The great street paved with water, filled
with shipping,

And all the world's flags flying and seagulls
dipping.

Yet when I am dust my penman may not
know

Those water-tramplng ships which made
me glow,

But think my wonder mad and fail to
find

Their glory, even dimly, from my mind,
And yet they made me:

not alone the ships
But men hard-palmed from tallying-on to
whips,

The two close friends of nearly twenty
years,

Sea-followers both, sea-wrestlers and sea-
peers,

Whose feet with mine wore many a bolt-
head bright

Treading the decks beneath the riding light.
Yet death will make that warmth of friend-
ship cold

And who'll know what one said and what
one told

Our hearts' communion and the broken
spells

When the loud call blew at the strike of
bells?

No one, I know, yet let me be believed
A soul entirely known is life achieved.

Years blank with hardship never speak a
word

Live in the soul to make the being stirred,
Towns can be prisons where the spirit dulls
Away from mates and ocean-wandering hulls,
Away from all bright water and great hills
And sheep-walks where the curlews cry their
fills,

Away in towns, where eyes have nought to
see

But dead museums and miles of misery
And floating life unrooted from man's need
And miles of fish-hooks baited to catch
greed

And life made wretched out of human ken
o

And miles of shopping women served by men.
So, if the penman sums my London days
Let him but say that there were holy ways,
Dull Bloomsbury streets of dull brick man-
sions old

With stinking doors where women stood to
scold

And drunken waits at Christmas with their
horn

Droning the news, in snow, that Christ was
born ;

And windy gas lamps and the wet roads
shining

And that old carol of the midnight whining,
And that old room (above the noisy slum)
Where there was wine and fire and talk
with some

Under strange pictures of the wakened soul
To whom this earth was but a burnt-out
coal.

O Time, bring back those midnights and
those friends,

Those glittering moments that a spirit lends
That all may be imagined from the flash
The cloud-hid god-game through the light-
ning gash

Those hours of stricken sparks from which
men took

Light to send out to men in song or
book.

Those friends who heard St. Pancras' bells
strike two

Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew.
Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's
best,

The thought beyond great poets not ex-
pressed,

The glory of mood where human frailty
failed,

The forts of human light not yet assailed,

Till the dim room had mind and seemed to
brood

Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,
Till we became a college, and each night
Was discipline and manhood and delight,
Till our farewells and winding down the
stairs

At each grey dawn had meaning that Time
spares,

That we, so linked, should roam the whole
world round

Teaching the ways our brooding minds had
found

Making that room our Chapter, our one
mind

Where all that this world soiled should be
refined.

Often at night I tread those streets again
And see the alley glimmering in the rain,

Yet now I miss that sign of earlier tramps
A house with shadows of plane-boughs under
lamps,

The secret house where once a beggar stood
Trembling and blind to show his woe for
food.

And now I miss that friend who used to
walk

Home to my lodgings with me, deep in
talk,

Wearing the last of night out in still
streets

Trodden by us and policemen on their
beats

And cats, but else deserted; now I miss
That lively mind and guttural laugh of his
And that strange way he had of making
gleam,

Like something real, the art we used to
dream.

London has been my prison ; but my books
Hills and great waters, labouring men and
 brooks,

Ships and deep friendships and remembered
 days

Which even now set all my mind ablaze
As that June day when, in the red bricks'
 chinks

I saw the old Roman ruins white with
 pinks

And felt the hillside haunted even then
By not dead memory of the Roman men.

And felt the hillside thronged by souls un-
 seen

Who knew the interest in me and were keen
That man alive should understand man
 dead

So many centuries since the blood was shed.
And quickened with strange hush because
 this comer

Sensed a strange soul alive behind the
summer.

That other day on Ercall when the stones
Were sunbleached white, like long unburied
bones,

While the bees droned and all the air was
sweet

From honey buried underneath my feet,
Honey of purple heather and white clover
Sealed in its gummy bags till summer's
over.

Then other days by water, by bright sea,
Clear as clean glass and my bright friend
with me,

The cove clean bottomed where we saw the
brown

Red spotted plaice go skimming six feet
down

And saw the long fronds waving, white
with shells,

Waving, unfolding, drooping, to the swells;
That sadder day when we beheld the great
And terrible beauty of a Lammas spate
Roaring white-mouthed in all the great
 cliff's gaps
Headlong, tree-tumbling fury of collapse,
While drenching clouds drove by and every
 sense
Was water roaring or rushing or in offence,
And mountain sheep stood huddled and
 blown gaps gleamed
Where torn white hair of torrents shook
 and streamed.
That sadder day when we beheld again
A spate going down in sunshine after rain,
When the blue reach of water leaping
 bright
Was one long ripple and clatter, flecked
 with white.
And that far day, that never blotted page

When youth was bright like flowers about
old age

Fair generations bringing thanks for life
To that old kindly man and trembling wife
After their sixty years: Time never made
A better beauty since the Earth was laid
Than that thanksgiving given to grey hair
For the great gift of life which brought
them there.

Days of endeavour have been good: the
days

Racing in cutters for the comrade's praise,
The day they led my cutter at the turn
Yet could not keep the lead and dropped
astern,

The moment in the spurt when both boats'
oars

Dipped in each other's wash and throats
grew hoarse

And teeth ground into teeth and both
strokes quickened

Lashing the sea, and gasps came, and hearts
sickened

And coxswains damned us, dancing, banking
stroke,

To put our weights on, though our hearts
were broke

And both boats seemed to stick and sea
seemed glue,

The tide a mill race we were struggling
through

And every quick recover gave us squints

Of them still there, and oar tossed water-
glints

And cheering came, our friends, our foemen
cheering,

A long, wild, rallying murmur on the hear-
ing —

“Port Fore!” and “Starboard Fore!”

“Port Fore.” “Port Fore.”

“Up with her, Starboard,” and at that each
oar

Lightened, though arms were bursting, and
eyes shut

And the oak stretchers grunted in the strut
And the curse quickened from the cox, our
bows

Crashed, and drove talking water, we made
vows

Chastity vows and temperance; in our pain
We numbered things we'd never eat again
If we could only win; then came the yell
“Starboard,” “Port Fore,” and then a
beaten bell

Rung as for fire to cheer us. “Now.”
Oars bent

Soul took the looms now body's bolt was
spent,

“Damn it, come on now,” “On now,”
“On now,” “Starboard.”

“Port Fore.” “Up with her, Port”; each
cutter harboured

Ten eye-shut painsick strugglers, “Heave,
oh, heave,”

Catcalls waked echoes like a shrieking
sheave.

“Heave,” and I saw a back, then two.
“Port Fore.”

“Starboard.” “Come on.” I saw the mid-
ship oar

And knew we had done them. “Port Fore.”
“Starboard.” “Now.”

I saw bright water spurting at their bow
Their cox’ full face an instant. They were
done.

The watchers’ cheering almost drowned the
gun.

We had hardly strength to toss our oars;
our cry

Cheering the losing cutter was a sigh.

Other bright days of action have seemed
great :

Wild days in a pampero off the Plate ;
Good swimming days, at Hog Back or the
Coves

Which the young gannet and the corbie
loves ;

Surf-swimming between rollers, catching
breath

Between the advancing grave and breaking
death,

Then shooting up into the sunbright smooth
To watch the advancing roller bare her tooth,
And days of labour also, loading, hauling ;

Long days at winch or capstan, heaving,
pawling ;

The days with oxen, dragging stone from
blasting,

And dusty days in mills, and hot days
masting.

Trucking on dust-dry deckings smooth like
ice,

And hunts in mighty wool-racks after mice ;
Mornings with buckwheat when the fields
did blanch

With White Leghorns come from the chicken
ranch.

Days near the spring upon the sunburnt hill,
Plying the maul or gripping tight the drill.
Delights of work most real, delights that
change

The headache life of towns to rapture
strange

Not known by townsmen, nor imagined ;
health

That puts new glory upon mental wealth
And makes the poor man rich.

But that ends, too,
Health with its thoughts of life ; and that
bright view

That sunny landscape from life's peak, that
glory,

And all a glad man's comments on life's
story

And thoughts of marvellous towns and liv-
ing men

And what pens tell and all beyond the pen
End, and are summed in words so truly
dead

They raise no image of the heart and head,
The life, the man alive, the friend we knew,
The mind ours argued with or listened to,
None; but are dead, and all life's keenness,
all,

Is dead as print before the funeral,
Even deader after, when the dates are
sought,

And cold minds disagree with what we
thought.

This many pictured world of many passions

Wears out the nations as a woman fashions,
And what life is is much to very few,
Men being so strange, so mad, and what
men do

So good to watch or share; but when men
count

Those hours of life that were a bursting
fount,

Sparkling the dusty heart with living
springs,

There seems a world, beyond our earthly
things,

Gated by golden moments, each bright
time

Opening to show the city white like lime,
High towered and many peopled. This
made sure,

Work that obscures those moments seems
impure,

Making our not-returning time of breath

Dull with the ritual and records of death,
That frost of fact by which our wisdom
gives
Correctly stated death to all that lives.

Best trust the happy moments. What they
gave
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave,
And gives his work compassion and new
eyes.
The days that make us happy make us wise.

SHIPS

I CANNOT tell their wonder nor make known
Magic that once thrilled through me to the
bone,
But all men praise some beauty, tell some
tale,
Vent a high mood which makes the rest
seem pale,
Pour their heart's blood to flourish one
green leaf,
Follow some Helen for her gift of grief,
And fail in what they mean, whate'er they
do :
You should have seen, man cannot tell to
you
The beauty of the ships of that my city.

That beauty now is spoiled by the sea's pity ;
For one may haunt the pier a score of
times,

Hearing St. Nicholas bells ring out the
chimes,

Yet never see those proud ones swaying
home

With mainyards backed and bows a cream
of foam,

Those bows so lovely-curving, cut so fine,

Those coulters of the many-bubbled brine,

As once, long since, when all the docks were
filled

With that sea-beauty man has ceased to
build.

Yet, though their splendour may have
ceased to be,

Each played her sovereign part in making
me ;

Now I return my thanks with heart and
lips

For the great queenliness of all those ships.

And first the first bright memory, still so
clear,

An autumn evening in a golden year,
When in the last lit moments before dark
The *Chepica*, a steel-grey lovely barque,
Came to an anchor near us on the flood,
Her trucks aloft in sun-glow red as blood.

Then come so many ships that I could
fill

Three docks with their fair hulls remem-
bered still,

Each with her special memory's special
grace,

Riding the sea, making the waves give
place

To delicate high beauty; man's best
strength,

Noble in every line in all their length.

Ailsa, Genista, ships, with long jibbooms,

The *Wanderer* with great beauty and strange
dooms,

Liverpool (mightiest then) superb, sublime,

The *California* huge, as slow as time.

The *Copley* swift, the perfect *J. T. North*,

The loveliest barque my city has sent forth,

Dainty *John Lockett* well remembered yet,

The splendid *Argus* with her skysail set,

Stalwart *Drumcliff*, white-blocked, majestic
Sierras,

Divine bright ships, the water's standard-
bearers;

Melpomene, Euphrosyne, and their sweet

Sea-troubling sisters of the Fernie fleet;

Corunna (in whom my friend died) and the
old

Long since loved *Esmeralda* long since
sold.

Centurion passed in Rio, *Glaucus* spoken,
Aladdin burnt, the *Bidston* water-broken,
Yola, in whom my friend sailed, *Dawpool*
trim,

Fierce-bowed *Egeria* plunging to the swim,
Stanmore wide-sterned, sweet *Cupica*, tall
Bard,

Queen in all harbours with her moon sail
yard.

Though I tell many, there must still be
others,

McVickar Marshall's ships and Fernie
Brothers',

Lochs, *Counties*, *Shires*, *Drums*, the count-
less lines

Whose house-flags all were once familiar
signs

At high main-trucks on Mersey's windy
ways

When sunlight made the wind-white water
blaze.

Their names bring back old mornings, when
the docks

Shone with their house-flags and their
painted blocks,

Their raking masts below the Custom
House

And all the marvellous beauty of their
bows.

Familiar steamers, too, majestic steamers,
Shearing Atlantic roller-tops to streamers,
Umbria, Etruria, noble, still at sea,
The grandest, then, that man had brought
to be.

Majestic, City of Paris, City of Rome,
Forever jealous racers, out and home.

The *Alfred Holt's* blue smoke-stacks down
the stream,

The fair *Loanda* with her bows a-cream.

Booth liners, Anchor liners, Red Star liners,
The marks and styles of countless ship-
designers,

The *Magdalena*, *Puno*, *Potosi*,

Lost *Cotopaxi*, all well known to me.

These splendid ships, each with her grace,
her glory,

Her memory of old song or comrade's story,
Still in my mind the image of life's need,
Beauty in hardest action, beauty indeed.

"They built great ships and sailed them"
sounds most brave

Whatever arts we have or fail to have ;

I touch my country's mind, I come to grips
With half her purpose, thinking of these
ships

That art untouched by softness, all that
line

Drawn ringing hard to stand the test of
brine,

That nobleness and grandeur, all that
beauty

Born of a manly life and bitter duty,

That splendour of fine bows which yet
could stand

The shock of rollers never checked by land.

That art of masts, sail crowded, fit to break,

Yet stayed to strength and backstayed
into rake,

The life demanded by that art, the keen

Eye-puckered, hard-case seamen, silent,
lean,—

They are grander things than all the art of
towns,

Their tests are tempests and the sea that
drowns,

They are my country's line, her great art
done

By strong brains labouring on the thought
unwon,

They mark our passage as a race of men,
Earth will not see such ships as those again.

TRUTH

MAN with his burning soul
Has but an hour of breath
To build a ship of Truth
In which his soul may sail,
Sail on the sea of death.
For death takes toll
Of beauty, courage, youth,
Of all but Truth.

Life's city ways are dark,
Men mutter by; the wells
Of the great waters moan.
O death, O sea, O tide,
The waters moan like bells.
No light, no mark,
The soul goes out alone
On seas unknown.

Stripped of all purple robes,
Stripped of all golden lies,
I will not be afraid.
Truth will preserve through death;
Perhaps the stars will rise,
The stars like globes.
The ship my striving made
May see night fade.

THEY CLOSED HER EYES

FROM THE SPANISH OF DON GUSTAVO

A. BÉCQUER.

THEY closed her eyes,
They were still open ;
They hid her face
With a white linen,
And, some sobbing,
Others in silence,
From the sad bedroom
All came away.

The night-light in a dish
Burned on the floor,
It flung on the wall
The bed's shadow,

And in that shadow
One saw sometimes
Drawn in sharp line
The body's shape.

The day awakened
At its first whiteness
With its thousand noises;
The town awoke
Before that contrast
Of life and strangeness,
Of light and darkness.

I thought a moment

My God, how lonely

The dead are!

From the house, shoulder-high
To church they bore her,
And in a chapel
They left her bier.

There they surrounded
Her pale body
With yellow candles
And black stuffs.

At the last stroke
Of the ringing for the souls
An old crone finished
Her last prayers.
She crossed the narrow nave ;
The doors moaned,
And the holy place
Remained deserted.

From a clock one heard
The measured ticking,
And from some candles
The guttering.
All things there
Were so grim and sad,

So dark and rigid,
That I thought a moment,
My God, how lonely
The dead are!

From the high belfry
The tongue of iron
Clanged, giving out
His sad farewell.
Crape on their clothes,
Her friends and kindred
Passed in a row,
Making procession.

In the last vault,
Dark and narrow,
The pickaxe opened
A niche at one end;
There they laid her down.
Soon they bricked the place up,

And with a gesture
Bade grief farewell.

Pickaxe on shoulder
The grave-digger,
Singing between his teeth,
Passed out of sight.
The night came down ;
It was all silent,
Lost in the shadows
I thought a moment.

*My God, how lonely
The dead are !*

In the long nights
Of bitter winter,
When the wind makes
The rafters creak,
When the violent rain
Lashes the windows,
Lonely, I remember
That poor girl.

There falls the rain
With its noise eternal.
There the north wind
Fights with the rain.
Stretched in the hollow
Of the damp bricks
Perhaps her bones
Freeze with the cold.

Does the dust return to dust?
Does the soul fly to heaven?
Is all vile matter,
Rottenness, filthiness?
I know not. But
There is something — something
That I cannot explain,
Something that gives us
Loathing, terror,
To leave the dead
So alone, so wretched.

THE HARP

FROM THE SPANISH OF DON GUSTAVO

A. BECQUER

IN a dark corner of the room,
Perhaps forgotten by its owner,
Silent and dim with dust,
I saw the harp.

How many musics slumbered in its strings,
As the bird sleeps in the branches,
Waiting the snowy hand
That could awaken them.

Ah me, I thought, how many, many times
Genius thus slumbers in a human soul,
Waiting, as Lazarus waited, for a voice
To bid him "Rise and walk."

SONNET

FROM THE SPANISH OF DON FRANCISCO DE
QUEVEDO

I SAW the ramparts of my native land,
One time so strong, now dropping in decay,
Their strength destroyed by this new age's
way

That has worn out and rotted what was
grand.

I went into the fields: there I could see
The sun drink up the waters newly thawed,
And on the hills the moaning cattle pawed;
Their miseries robbed the day of light for
me.

I went into my house: I saw how spotted,
Decaying things made that old home their
prize.

My withered walking-staff had come to
bend ;

I felt the age had won ; my sword was
rotted,

And there was nothing on which I set my
eyes

That was not a reminder of the end.

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF HIS
WIFE

FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF ANTONIO DE
FERREIRO

THAT blessed sunlight that once showed to
me

My way to heaven more plain more cer-
tainly,

And with her bright beam banished utterly

All trace of mortal sorrow far from me,

Has gone from me, has left her prison sad,

And I am blind and alone and gone astray,

Like a lost pilgrim in a desert way

Wanting the blessed guide that once he had.

Thus with a spirit bowed and mind a blur

I trace the holy steps where she has gone,

By valleys and by meadows and by moun-
tains,

And everywhere I catch a glimpse of her.

She takes me by the hand and leads me on,

And my eyes follow her, my eyes made
fountains.

SONG

ONE sunny time in May
When lambs were sporting,
The sap ran in the spray
And I went courting,
And all the apple boughs
Were bright with blossom,
I picked an early rose
For my love's bosom.

And then I met her friend,
Down by the water,
Who cried "She's met her end,
That gray-eyed daughter;
That voice of hers is stilled
Her beauty broken."
O me, my love is killed,
My love unspoken.

She was too sweet, too dear,
To die so cruel,
O Death, why leave me here
And take my jewel?
Her voice went to the bone,
So true, so ringing,
And now I go alone,
Winter or spring.

THE BALLAD OF SIR BORS

WOULD I could win some quiet and rest, and
a little ease,

In the cool grey hush of the dusk, in the
dim green place of the trees,

Where the birds are singing, singing, sing-
ing, crying aloud

The song of the red, red rose that blossoms
beyond the seas.

Would I could see it, the rose, when the
light begins to fail,

And a lone white star in the West is glim-
mering on the mail;

The red, red passionate rose of the sacred
blood of the Christ,

In the shining chalice of God, the cup of
the Holy Grail.

The dusk comes gathering grey, and the
darkness dims the West,
The oxen low to the byre, and all bells ring
to rest ;
But I ride over the moors, for the dusk still
bides and waits,
That brims my soul with the glow of the
rose that ends the Quest.

My horse is spavined and ribbed, and his
bones come through his hide,
My sword is rotten with rust, but I shake
the reins and ride,
For the bright white birds of God that nest
in the rose have called,
And never a township now is a town where
I can bide.

It will happen at last, at dusk, as my horse
limps down the fell,

A star will glow like a note God strikes on a
silver bell,

And the bright white birds of God will
carry my soul to Christ,

And the sight of the Rose, the Rose, will
pay for the years of hell.

SPANISH WATERS

SPANISH waters, Spanish waters, you are
ringing in my ears,

Like a slow sweet piece of music from the
grey forgotten years;

Telling tales, and beating tunes, and bring-
ing weary thoughts to me

Of the sandy beach at Muertos, where I
would that I could be.

There's a surf breaks on Los Muertos, and
it never stops to roar,

And it's there we came to anchor, and it's
there we went ashore,

Where the blue lagoon is silent amid snags
of rotting trees,

Dropping like the clothes of corpses cast up
by the seas.

We anchored at Los Muertos when the dipping sun was red,
We left her half-a-mile to sea, to west of Nigger Head ;
And before the mist was on the Cay, before the day was done,
We were all ashore on Muertos with the gold that we had won.

We bore it through the marshes in a half-score battered chests,
Sinking, in the sucking quagmires, to the sunburn on our breasts,
Heaving over tree-trunks, gasping, damning at the flies and heat,
Longing for a long drink, out of silver, in the ship's cool lazareet.

The moon came white and ghostly as we laid the treasure down,

There was gear there'd make a beggarman
as rich as Lima Town,
Copper charms and silver trinkets from the
chests of Spanish crews,
Gold doubloons and double moydores, louis
d'ors and portagues,

Clumsy yellow-metal earrings from the
Indians of Brazil,
Uncut emeralds out of Rio, bezoar stones
from Guayaquil;
Silver, in the crude and fashioned, pots of
old Arica bronze,
Jewels from the bones of Incas desecrated
by the Dons.

We smoothed the place with mattocks, and
we took and blazed the tree,
Which marks yon where the gear is hid that
none will ever see,

And we laid aboard the ship again, and
south away we steers,
Through the loud surf of Los Muertos
which is beating in my ears.

I'm the last alive that knows it. All the
rest have gone their ways
Killed, or died, or come to anchor in the old
Mulatas Cays,
And I go singing, fiddling, old and starved
and in despair,
And I know where all that gold is hid, if I
were only there.

It's not the way to end it all. I'm old,
and nearly blind,
And an old man's past's a strange thing,
for it never leaves his mind.
And I see in dreams, awhile, the beach,
the sun's disc dipping red,

And the tall ship, under topsails, swaying
in past Nigger Head.

I'd be glad to step ashore there. Glad to
take a pick and go
To the lone blazed coco-palm tree in the
place no others know,
And lift the gold and silver that has
mouldered there for years
By the loud surf of Los Muertos which is
beating in my ears.

CARGOES

QUINQUIREME of Nineveh from distant
Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory,
And apes and peacocks,
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet white
wine.

Stately Spanish galleon coming from the
Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-
green shores,
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.

Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked
smoke stack,

Butting through the Channel in the mad
March days,

With a cargo of Tyne coal,

Road-rails, pig-lead,

Firewood, iron-ware, and cheap tin trays.

CAPTAIN STRATTON'S FANCY

Oh some are fond of red wine, and some are
fond of white,
And some are all for dancing by the pale
moonlight ;
But rum alone's the tippie, and the heart's
delight
Of the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of Spanish wine, and
some are fond of French,
And some'll swallow tay and stuff fit only
for a wench ;
But I'm for right Jamaica till I roll beneath
the bench,
Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are for the lily, and some are for
the rose,

But I am for the sugar-cane that in Jamaica
grows ;

For it's that that makes the bonny drink to
warm my copper nose,

Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of fiddles, and a song
well sung,

And some are all for music for to lilt upon
the tongue ;

But mouths were made for tankards, and
for sucking at the bung,

Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are fond of dancing, and some are
fond of dice,

And some are all for red lips, and pretty
lasses' eyes ;

But a right Jamaica punchcon is a finer
prize

To the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some that's good and godly ones they
hold that it's a sin

To troll the jolly bowl around, and let the
dollars spin ;

But I'm for toleration and for drinking at
an inn,

Says the old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

Oh some are sad and wretched folk that go
in silken suits,

And there's a mort of wicked rogues that
live in good reputes ;

So I'm for drinking honestly, and dying in
my boots,

Like an old bold mate of Henry Morgan.

AN OLD SONG RE-SUNG

I SAW a ship a-sailing, a-sailing, a-sailing,
With emeralds and rubies and sapphires in
her hold ;
And a bosun in a blue coat bawling at the
railing,
Piping through a silver call that had a chain
of gold ;
The summer wind was failing and the tall
ship rolled.

I saw a ship a-steering, a-steering,
a-steering,
With roses in red thread worked upon her
sails ;
With sacks of purple amethysts, the spoils
of buccaneering,

Skins of musky yellow wine, and silks in
bales,

Her merry men were cheering, hauling on
the brails.

I saw a ship a-sinking, a-sinking, a-sinking,
With glittering sea-water splashing on her
decks,

With seamen in her spirit-room singing
songs and drinking,

Pulling claret bottles down, and knocking
off the necks,

The broken glass was chinking as she sank
among the wrecks.

ST. MARY'S BELLS

It's pleasant in Holy Mary
By San Marie lagoon,
The bells they chime and jingle
From dawn to afternoon.
They rhyme and chime and mingle,
They pulse and boom and beat,
And the laughing bells are gentle
And the mournful bells are sweet.

Oh, who are the men that ring them,
The bells of San Marie,
Oh, who but sonsie seamen
Come in from over sea,
And merrily in the belfries
They rock and sway and hale,
And send the bells a-jangle,
And down the lusty ale.

It's pleasant in Holy Mary
To hear the beaten bells
Come booming into music,
Which throbs, and clangs, and swells,
From sunset till the daybreak,
From dawn to afternoon.
In port of Holy Mary
On San Marie lagoon.

LONDON TOWN

OH London Town's a fine town, and Lon-
don sights are rare,
And London ale is right ale, and brisk's the
London air,
And busily goes the world there, but crafty
grows the mind,
And London Town of all towns I'm glad to
leave behind.

Then hey for croft and hop-yard, and hill,
and field, and pond,
With Breden Hill before me and Malvern
Hill beyond.

The hawthorn white i' the hedgerow, and
all the spring's attire
In the comely land of Teme and Lugg, and
Clent, and Clee, and Wyre.

Oh London girls are brave girls, in silk and
cloth o' gold,

And London shops are rare shops, where
gallant things are sold,

And bonnily clinks the gold there, but
drowsily blinks the eye,

And London Town of all towns I'm glad to
hurry by.

Then, hey for covert and woodland, and
ash and elm and oak,

Tewkesbury inns, and Malvern roofs, and
Worcester chimney smoke,

The apple trees in the orchard, the cattle in
the byre,

And all the land from Ludlow town to
Bredon church's spire.

Oh London tunes are new tunes, and Lon-
don books are wise,

And London plays are rare plays, and fine
to country eyes,
But craftily fares the knave there, and
wickedly fares the Jew,
And London Town of all towns I'm glad to
hurry through.

So hey for the road, the west road, by mill
and forge and fold,
Scent of the fern and song of the lark by
brook, and field, and wold,
To the comely folk at the hearth-stone and
the talk beside the fire,
In the hearty land, where I was bred, my
land of heart's desire.

THE EMIGRANT

GOING by Daly's shanty I heard the boys
within

Dancing the Spanish hornpipe to Driscoll's
violin,

I heard the sea-boots shaking the rough
planks of the floor,

But I was going westward, I hadn't heart
for more.

All down the windy village the noise rang
in my ears,

Old sea boots stamping, shuffling, it brought
the bitter tears,

The old tune piped and quavered, the lilts
came clear and strong,

But I was going westward, I couldn't join
the song.

There were the grey stone houses, the night
wind blowing keen,
The hill-sides pale with moonlight, the
young corn springing green,
The hearth nooks lit and kindly, with dear
friends good to see,
But I was going westward, and the ship
waited me.

PORT OF HOLY PETER

THE blue laguna rocks and quivers,
Dull gurgling eddies twist and spin,
The climate does for people's livers,
It's a nasty place to anchor in
Is Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

The town begins on the sea-beaches,
And the town's mad with the stinging
flies,
The drinking water's mostly leeches,
It's a far remove from Paradise
Is Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

There's sand-bagging and throat-slitting,
And quiet graves in the sea slime,
Stabbing, of course, and rum-hitting,
Dirt, and drink, and stink, and crime,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

All the day the wind's blowing
From the sick swamp below the hills,
All the night the plague's growing,
And the dawn brings the fever chills,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

You get a thirst there's no slaking,
You get the chills and fever-shakes,
Tongue yellow and head aching,
And then the sleep that never wakes.

And all the year the heat's baking,
The sea rots and the earth quakes,
In Spanish port,
Fever port,
Port of Holy Peter.

BEAUTY

I HAVE seen dawn and sunset on moors and
windy hills

Coming in solemn beauty like slow old
tunes of Spain :

I have seen the lady April bringing the
daffodils,

Bringing the springing grass and the soft
warm April rain.

I have heard the song of the blossoms and
the old chant of the sea,

And seen strange lands from under the
arched white sails of ships ;

But the loveliest things of beauty God ever
has showed to me,

Are her voice, and her hair, and eyes, and
the dear red curve of her lips.

THE SEEKERS

FRIENDS and loves we have none, nor
wealth nor blessed abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the
other end of the road.

Not for us are content, and quiet, and peace
of mind,
For we go seeking a city that we shall never
find.

There is no solace on earth for us — for
such as we —
Who search for a hidden city that we shall
never see.

Only the road and the dawn, the sun, the
wind, and the rain,
And the watch fire under stars, and sleep,
and the road again.

We seek the City of God, and the haunt
where beauty dwells,
And we find the noisy mart and the sound
of burial bells.

Never the golden city, where radiant people
meet,
But the dolorous town where mourners are
going about the street.

We travel the dusty road till the light of
the day is dim,
And sunset shows us spires away on the
world's rim.

We travel from dawn to dusk, till the day
is past and by,
Seeking the Holy City beyond the rim of
the sky.

Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth
nor blest abode,
But the hope of the City of God at the
other end of the road.

PRAYER

WHEN the last sea is sailed, when the last
shallow's charted,

When the last field is reaped, and the last
harvest stored,

When the last fire is out and the last guest
departed,

Grant the last prayer that I shall pray, be
good to me, O Lord.

And let me pass in a night at sea, a night
of storm and thunder,

In the loud crying of the wind through sail
and rope and spar,

Send me a ninth great peaceful wave to
drown and roll me under

To the cold tunny-fish's home where the
drowned galleons are.

And in the dim green quiet place far out of
sight and hearing,

Grant I may hear at whiles the wash and
thresh of the sea-foam

About the fine keen bows of the stately
clippers steering

Towards the lone northern star and the fair
ports of home.

DAWN

THE dawn comes cold : the haystack smokes,
The green twigs crackle in the fire,
The dew is dripping from the oaks,
And sleepy men bear milking-yokes
Slowly towards the cattle-byre.

Down in the town a clock strikes six,
The grey east heaven burns and glows,
The dew shines on the thatch of ricks,
A slow old crone comes gathering sticks,
The red cock in the ox-yard crows.

Beyond the stack where we have lain
The road runs twisted like a snake
(The white road to the land of Spain),
The road that we must foot again,
Though the feet halt and the heart ache.

LAUGH AND BE MERRY

LAUGH and be merry, remember, better the
world with a song,
Better the world with a blow in the teeth of
a wrong.

Laugh, for the time is brief, a thread the
length of a span.

Laugh and be proud to belong to the old
proud pageant of man.

Laugh and be merry: remember, in olden
time.

God made Heaven and Earth for joy He
took in a rhyme,

Made them, and filled them full with the
strong red wine of His mirth,

The splendid joy of the stars: the joy of
the earth.

So we must laugh and drink from the deep
blue cup of the sky,
Join the jubilant song of the great stars
sweeping by,
Laugh, and battle, and work, and drink of the
wine outpoured
In the dear green earth, the sign of the joy
of the Lord.

Laugh and be merry together, like brothers
akin,
Guesting awhile in the rooms of a beautiful
inn,
Glad till the dancing stops, and the lilt of
the music ends.
Laugh till the game is played; and be you
merry, my friends.

JUNE TWILIGHT

THE twilight comes ; the sun
Dips down and sets,
The boys have done
Play at the nets.

In a warm golden glow
The woods are steeped.
The shadows grow ;
The bat has cheeped.

Sweet smells the new-mown hay ;
The mowers pass
Home, each his way,
Through the grass.

The night-wind stirs the fern,

A night-jar spins ;

The windows burn

In the inns.

Dusky it grows. The moon !

The dews descend.

Love, can this beauty in our hearts

End ?

ROADWAYS

ONE road leads to London,
One road runs to Wales,
My road leads me seawards
To the white dipping sails.

One road leads to the river,
As it goes singing slow ;
My road leads to shipping,
Where the bronzed sailors go.

Leads me, lures me, calls me
To salt green tossing sea ;
A road without earth's road-dust
Is the right road for me.

A wet road heaving, shining,
And wild with seagulls' cries,

A mad salt sea-wind blowing
The salt spray in my eyes.

My road calls me, lures me
West, east, south, and north;
Most roads lead men homewards,
My road leads me forth

To add more miles to the tally
Of grey miles left behind,
In quest of that one beauty
God put me here to find.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT

THE perfect disc of the sacred moon
Through still blue heaven serenely swims,
And the lone bird's liquid music brims
The peace of the night with a perfect tune.

This is that holiest night of the year
When (the mowers say) may be heard and
seen

The ghostly court of the English queen,
Who rides to harry and hunt the deer.

And the woodland creatures cower awake,
A strange unrest is on harts and does,
For the maiden Dian a-hunting goes,
And the trembling deer are afoot in the
brake.

They start at a shaken leaf: the sound
Of a dry twig snapped by a squirrel's foot
Is a nameless dread: and to them the
hoot

Of a mousing owl is the cry of a hound.

Oh soon the forest will ring with cries,
The dim green coverts will flash: the
grass

Will glow as the radiant hunters pass
After the quarry with burning eyes.

The hurrying feet will range unstayed
Of questing goddess and hunted fawn,
Till the east is grey with the sacred dawn,
And the red cock wakens the milking maid.

THE HARPER'S SONG

THIS sweetness trembling from the strings

The music of my troublous lute

Hath timed Herodias' daughter's foot ;

Setting a-clink her ankle-rings

Whenas she danced to feasted kings.

Where gemmed apparel burned and caught

The sunset 'neath the golden dome,

To the dark beauties of old Rome

My sorrowful lute hath haply brought

Sad memories sweet with tender thought.

When night had fallen and lights and fires

Were darkened in the homes of men,

Some sighing echo stirred : — and then

The old cunning wakened from the wires

The old sorrows and the old desires.

Dead Kings in long forgotten lands,
And all dead beauteous women ; some
Whose pride imperial hath become
Old armour rusting in the sands
And shards of iron in dusty hands,

Have heard my lyre's soft rise and fall
Go trembling down the paven ways,
Till every heart was all ablaze —
Hasty each foot — to obey the call
To triumph or to funeral.

Could I begin again the slow
Sweet mournful music filled with tears,
Surely the old, dead, dusty ears
Would hear ; the old drowsy eyes would
glow,
Old memories come ; old hopes and fears,
And time restore the long ago.

THE GENTLE LADY

So beautiful, so dainty-sweet,
So like a lyre's delightful touch —
A beauty perfect, ripe, complete
That art's own hand could only smutch
And nature's self not better much.

So beautiful, so purely wrought,
Like a fair missal penned with hymns,
So gentle, so surpassing thought —
A beauteous soul in lovely limbs,
A lantern that an angel trims.

So simple-sweet, without a sin,
Like gentle music gently timed,
Like rhyme-words coming aptly in,
To round a moonéd poem rhymed
To tunes the laughing bells have chimed.

THE DEAD KNIGHT

THE cleanly rush of the mountain air,
And the mumbling, grumbling humble-bees,
Are the only things that wander there.
The pitiful bones are laid at ease,
The grass has grown in his tangled hair,
And a rambling bramble binds his knees.

To shrieve his soul from the pangs of hell,
The only requiem bells that rang
Were the harebell and the heather bell.
Hushed he is with the holy spell
In the gentle hymn the wind sang,
And he lies quiet, and sleeps well.
He is bleached and blanced with the summer sun ;

The misty rain and the cold dew

Have altered him from the kingly one
Whom his lady loved, and his men knew,
And dwindled^{ed} him to a skeleton.

The vetches have twined about his bones,
The straggling ivy twists and creeps
In his eye-sockets: the nettle keeps
Vigil about him while he sleeps.
Over his body the wind moans
With a dreary tune throughout the day,
In a chorus wistful, eerie, thin
As the gulls' cry, as the cry in the bay,
The mournful word the seas say
When tides are wandering out or in.

SORROW OF MYDATH

WEARY the cry of the wind is, weary the
sea,

Weary the heart and the mind and the
body of me,

Would I were out of it, done with it, would
I could be

A white gull crying along the desolate
sands.

Outcast, derelict soul in a body accurst,
Standing drenched with the spindrift, stand-
ing athirst,

For the cool green waves of death to arise
and burst

In a tide of quiet for me on the desolate
sands.

Would that the waves and the long white
hair of the spray

Would gather in splendid terror, and blot
me away

To the sunless place of the wrecks where
the waters sway

Gently, dreamily, quietly over desolate
sands.

TWILIGHT

TWILIGHT it is, and the far woods are dim,
and the rooks cry and call.

Down in the valley the lamps, and the mist,
and a star over all,

There by the rick, where they thresh, is the
drone at an end,

Twilight it is, and I travel the road with
my friend.

I think of the friends who are dead, who
were dear long ago in the past,

Beautiful friends who are dead, though I
know that death cannot last;

Friends with the beautiful eyes that the dust
has defiled,

Beautiful souls who were gentle when I was
a child.

INVOCATION

O WANDERER into many brains,
O spark the emperor's purple hides,
You sow the dusk with fiery grains
When the gold horseman rides.
O beauty on the darkness hurled,
Be it through me you shame the world.

POSTED AS MISSING

UNDER all her topsails she trembled like a
stag,

The wind made a ripple in her bonny red
flag ;

They cheered her from the shore and they
cheered her from the pier,

And under all her topsails she trembled like
a deer.

So she passed swaying, where the green
seas run,

Her wind-steadied topsails were stately in
the sun ;

There was glitter on the water from her
red port light,

So she passed swaying, till she was out
of sight.

Long and long ago it was, a weary time
it is,

The bones of her sailor-men are coral plants
by this ;

Coral plants, and shark-weed, and a mer-
maid's comb,

And if the fishers net them they never
bring them home.

It's rough on sailors' women. They have
to mangle hard,

And stitch at dungarees till their finger-
ends are scarred,

Thinking of the sailor-men who sang among
the crowd,

Hoisting of her topsails when she sailed so
proud.

A CREED

I HOLD that when a person dies
His soul returns again to earth ;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise
Another mother gives him birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the roads again.

Such is my own belief and trust ;
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust
And turned, as dust, to dust again ;
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Thebes, in Troy, in Babylon.

All that I rightly think or do,
Or make, or spoil, or bless, or blast,

Is curse or blessing justly due
For sloth or effort in the past.
My life's a statement of the sum
Of vice indulged, or overcome.

I know that in my lives to be
My sorry heart will ache and burn,
And worship, unavailingly,
The woman whom I used to spurn,
And shake to see another have
The love I spurned, the love she gave.

And I shall know, in angry words,
In gibes, and mocks, and many a tear,
A carrion flock of homing-birds,
The gibes and scorns I uttered here.
The brave word that I failed to speak
Will brand me dastard on the cheek.

And as I wander on the roads
I shall be helped and healed and blessed ;

Dear words shall cheer and be as goads

To urge to heights before unguessed.

My road shall be the road I made;

All that I gave shall be repaid.

So shall I fight, so shall I tread,

In this long war beneath the stars;

So shall a glory wreath my head,

So shall I faint and show the scars,

Until this case, this clogging mould,

Be smithied all to kingly gold.

WHEN BONY DEATH

WHEN bony Death has chilled her gentle
blood,

And dimmed the brightness of her wistful
eyes,

And changed her glorious beauty into mud
By his old skill in hateful wizardries ;

When an old lichened marble strives to tell
How sweet a grace, how red a lip was
hers ;

When rheumy grey-beards say, "I knew her
well,"

Showing the grave to curious worshippers ;

When all the roses that she sowed in me
Have dripped their crimson petals and
decayed,

Leaving no greenery on any tree

That her dear hands in my heart's garden
laid,

Then grant, old Time, to my green moulder-
ing skull,

These songs may keep her memory beauti-
ful.

THE WEST WIND

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of
birds' cries ;

I never hear the west wind but tears are in
my eyes.

For it comes from the west lands, the old
brown hills,

And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as
tired as mine,

Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's
like wine.

There is cool green grass there, where men
may lie at rest,

And the thrushes are in song there, fluting
from the nest.

“Will you not come home, brother? You
have been long away.

It's April, and blossom time, and white is
the spray :

And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is
the rain,

Will you not come home, brother, home to
us again ?

The young corn is green, brother, where the
rabbits run ;

It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm
rain and sun.

It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a
man's brain,

To hear the wild bees and see the merry
spring again.

Larks are singing in the west, brother,
above the green wheat,

So will you not come home, brother, and
rest your tired feet?

I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep
for aching eyes,"

Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of
birds' cries.

It's the white road westwards is the road I
must tread

To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest
for heart and head,

To the violets and the brown brooks and
the thrushes' song

In the fine land, the west land, the land
where I belong.

HER HEART

HER heart is always doing lovely things,
Filling my wintry mind with simple
flowers;
Playing sweet tunes on my untuned strings,
Delighting all my undelightful hours.

She plays me like a lute, what tune she will,
No string in me but trembles at her
touch,
Shakes into sacred music, or is still,
Trembles or stops, or swells, her skill is
such.

And in the dusty tavern of my soul
Where filthy lusts drink witches' brew for
wine,

Her gentle hand still keeps me from the
bowl,

Still keeps me man, saves me from being
swine.

All grace in me, all sweetness in my verse,
Is hers, is my dear girl's, and only hers.

BEING HER FRIEND

BEING her friend, I do not care, not I,
How gods or men may wrong me, beat
me down ;

Her word's sufficient star to travel by,
I count her quiet praise sufficient crown.

Being her friend, I do not covet gold,
Save for a royal gift to give her pleasure ;
To sit with her, and have her hand to hold,
Is wealth, I think, surpassing minted
treasure.

Being her friend, I only covet art,
A white pure flame to search me as I
trace

In crooked letters from a throbbing heart
The hymn to beauty written on her face.

FRAGMENTS

TROY TOWN is covered up with weeds,
The rabbits and the pismires brood
On broken gold, and shards, and beads
Where Priam's ancient palace stood.

The floors of many a gallant house
Are matted with the roots of grass ;
The glow-worm and the nimble mouse
Among her ruins flit and pass.

And there, in orts of blackened bone,
The widowed Trojan beauties lie,
And Simois babbles over stone
And waps and gurgles to the sky.

Once there were merry days in Troy,
Her chimneys smoked with cooking meals,
The passing chariots did annoy
The sunning housewives at their wheels.

And many a lovely Trojan maid
Set Trojan lads to lovely things;
The game of life was nobly played,
They played the game like Queens and
Kings.

So that, when Troy had greatly passed
In one red roaring fiery coal,
The courts the Grecians overcast
Became a city in the soul.

In some green island of the sea,
Where now the shadowy coral grows
In pride and pomp and empery
The courts of old Atlantis rose.

In many a glittering house of glass
The Atlanteans wandered there;
The paleness of their faces was
Like ivory, so pale they were.

And hushed they were, no noise of words
In those bright cities ever rang;
Only their thoughts, like golden birds,
About their chambers thrilled and sang.

They knew all wisdom, for they knew
The souls of those Egyptian Kings
Who learned, in ancient Babilu,
The beauty of immortal things.

They knew all beauty — when they thought
The air chimed like a stricken lyre,
The elemental birds were wrought,
The golden birds became a fire.

And straight to busy camps and marts
The singing flames were swiftly gone;
The trembling leaves of human hearts
Hid boughs for them to perch upon.

And men in desert places, men
Abandoned, broken, sick with fears,

Rose singing, swung their swords agen,
And laughed and died among the spears.

The green and greedy seas have drowned
That city's glittering walls and towers,
Her sunken minarets are crowned
With red and russet water-flowers.

In towers and rooms and golden courts
The shadowy coral lifts her sprays;
The scrawl hath gorged her broken orts,
The shark doth haunt her hidden ways.

But, at the falling of the tide,
The golden birds still sing and gleam,
The Atlanteans have not died,
Immortal things still give us dream.

The dream that fires man's heart to make,
To build, to do, to sing or say
A beauty Death can never take,
An Adam from the crumbled clay.

BORN FOR NOUGHT ELSE

BORN for nought else, for nothing but for
this,

To watch the soft blood throbbing in her
throat,

To think how comely sweet her body is,
And learn the poem of her face by rote.

Born for nought else but to attempt a
rhyme

That shall describe her womanhood
aright,

And make her holy to the end of Time,
And be my soul's acquittal in God's
sight.

Born for nought else but to expressly mark
The music of her dear delicious ways;

Born but to perish meanly in the dark,
Yet born to be the man to sing her
praise.

Born for nought else: there is a spirit tells
My lot's a King's, being born for nothing
else.

TEWKESBURY ROAD

It is good to be out on the road, and going
one knows not where,
Going through meadow and village, one
knows not whither nor why ;
Through the grey light drift of the dust, in
the keen cool rush of the air,
Under the flying white clouds, and the
broad blue lift of the sky.

And to halt at the chattering brook, in the
tall green fern at the brink
Where the harebell grows, and the gorse,
and the foxgloves purple and white ;
Where the shy-eyed delicate deer troop
down to the brook to drink
When the stars are mellow and large at
the coming on of the night.

O, to feel the beat of the rain, and the
homely smell of the earth,
Is a tune for the blood to jig to, a joy
past power of words ;
And the blessed green comely meadows are
all a-ripple with mirth
At the noise of the lambs at play and the
dear wild cry of the birds.

THE DEATH ROOMS

My soul has many an old decaying room
Hung with the ragged arras of the past,
Where startled faces flicker in the gloom,
And horrid whispers set the cheek aghast.

Those dropping rooms are haunted by a
death,
A something like a worm gnawing a
brain,
That bids me heed what bitter lesson saith
The blind wind beating on the window-
pane.

None dwells in those old rooms: none ever
can —

I pass them through at night with hidden
head;

Lock'd rotting rooms her eyes must never
scan,

Floors that her blessed feet must never
tread.

Haunted old rooms: rooms she must never
know,

Where death-ticks knock and mouldering
panels glow.

IGNORANCE

SINCE I have learned Love's shining alpha-
bet,

And spelled in ink what's writ in me in
flame,

And borne her sacred image richly set

Here in my heart to keep me quit of
shame ;

Since I have learned how wise and passing
wise

Is the dear friend whose beauty I extol,
And know how sweet a soul looks through
the eyes,

That are so pure a window to her soul ;

Since I have learned how rare a woman
shows

As much in all she does as in her looks,
And seen the beauty of her shame the
 rose,

And dim the beauty writ about in books ;

All I have learned, and can learn, shows me
 this —

How scant, how slight, my knowledge of
 her is.

SEA FEVER

I MUST go down to the seas again, to the
lonely sea and the sky,

And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to
steer her by ;

And the wheel's kick and the wind's song
and the white sail's shaking,

And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a
grey dawn breaking,

I must go down to the seas again, for the
call of the running tide

Is a wild call and a clear call that may not
be denied ;

And all I ask is a windy day with the white
clouds flying,

And the flung spray and the blown spume,
and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the
vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way
where the wind's like a whetted knife ;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laugh-
ing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when
the long trick's over.

THE WATCH IN THE WOOD

WHEN Death has laid her in his quietude,
And dimmed the glow of her benignant
star,
Her tired limbs shall rest within a wood,
In a green glade where oaks and beeches
are,
Where the shy fawns, the pretty fawns, the
deer,
With mild brown eyes shall view her
spirit's husk ;
The sleeping woman of her will appear,
The maiden Dian shining through the dusk.
And, when the stars are white as twilight
fails,
And the green leaves are hushed, and the
winds swoon,

The calm pure thrilling throats of nightin-
gales

Shall hymn her sleeping beauty to the
moon.

All the woods hushed — save for a dripping
rose,

All the woods dim — save where a glow-
worm glows.

Brimming the quiet woods with holiness,
The lone brown birds will hymn her till
the dawn,

The delicate, shy, dappled deer will press
Soft pitying muzzles on her swathèd
lawn.

The little pretty rabbits running by.

Will pause among the dewy grass to
peep,

Their thudding hearts affrighted to espy
The maiden Dian lying there asleep.

Brown, lustrous, placid eyes of sylvan
things

Will wonder at the quiet in her face,
While from the thorny branch the singer
brings

Beauty and peace to that immortal place.

Until the grey dawn sets the woods astir
The pure birds' thrilling psalm will mourn
for her.

C. L. M.

IN the dark womb where I began
My mother's life made me a man.
Through all the months of human birth
Her beauty fed my common earth.
I cannot see, nor breathe, nor stir,
But through the death of some of her.

Down in the darkness of the grave
She cannot see the life she gave.
For all her love, she cannot tell
Whether I use it ill or well,
Nor knock at dusty doors to find
Her beauty dusty in the mind.

If the grave's gates could be undone,
She would not know her little son,
I am so grown. If we should meet

She would pass by me in the street,
Unless my soul's face let her see
My sense of what she did for me.

What have I done to keep in mind
My debt to her and womankind?
What woman's happier life repays
Her for those months of wretched days?
For all my mouthless body leeches
Ere Birth's releasing hell was reached?

What have I done, or tried, or said
In thanks to that dear woman dead?
Men triumph over women still,
Men trample women's rights at will,
And man's lust roves the world untamed.

* * * *

O grave, keep shut lest I be shamed.

WASTE

No rose but fades : no glory but must pass :

No hue but dims : no precious silk but
frets.

Her beauty must go underneath the grass,

Under the long roots of the violets.

O, many glowing beauties Time has hid

In that dark, blotting box the villain
sends.

He covers over with a coffin-lid

Mothers and sons, and foes and lovely
friends.

Maids that were redly-lipped and comely-
skinned,

Friends that deserved a sweeter bed than
clay,

All are as blossoms blowing down the
wind,

Things the old envious villain sweeps
away.

And though the mutterer laughs and
church bells toll,

Death brings another April to the soul.

THIRD MATE

ALL the sheets are clacking, all the blocks
are whining,

The sails are frozen stiff and the wetted
decks are shining ;

The reef's in the topsails, and it's coming
on to blow,

And I think of the dear girl I left long
ago.

Grey were her eyes, and her hair was long
and bonny,

Golden was her hair, like the wild bees'
honey.

And I was but a dog, and a mad one to
despise,

The gold of her hair and the grey of her
eyes.

There's the sea before me, and my home's
 behind me,
And beyond there the strange lands where
 nobody will mind me,
No one but the girls with the paint upon
 their cheeks,
Who sell away their beauty to whomsoever
 seeks.

There'll be drink and women there, and
 songs and laughter,
Peace from what is past and from all that
 follows after;
And a fellow will forget how a woman lies
 awake,
Lonely in the night watch crying for his
 sake.

Black it blows and bad and it howls like
 slaughter,

And the ship she shudders as she takes the
water.

Hissing flies the spindrift like a wind-
blown smoke,

And I think of a woman and a heart I
broke.

THE WILD DUCK

TWILIGHT. Red in the west.
Dimness. A glow on the wood.
The teams plod home to rest.
The wild duck come to glean.
O souls not understood,
What a wild cry in the pool;
What things have the farm ducks
seen
That they cry so — huddle and cry?

Only the soul that goes.
Eager. Eager. Flying.
Over the globe of the moon,
Over the wood that glows.
Wings linked. Necks a-strain,

A rush and a wild crying.

* * *

A cry of the long pain

In the reeds of a steel lagoon.

In a land that no man knows.

CHRISTMAS, 1903

O, THE sea breeze will be steady, and the
tall ship's going trim,
And the dark blue skies are paling, and
the white stars burning dim;
The long night watch is over, and the long
sea-roving done,
And yonder light is the Start Point light,
and yonder comes the sun.

O, we have been with the Spaniards, and
far and long on the sea;
But there are the twisted chimneys, and
the gnarled old inns on the quay.
The wind blows keen as the day breaks,
the roofs are white with the rime,
And the church-bells ring as the sun comes
up to call men in to Prime.

The church-bells rock and jangle, and there
is peace on the earth.

Peace and good will and plenty and Christ-
mas games and mirth.

O, the gold glints bright on the wind-vane
as it shifts above the squire's house,
And the water of the bar of Salcombe is
muttering about the bows.

O, the salt sea tide of Salcombe, it
wrinkles into wisps of foam,

And the church-bells ring in Salcombe to
ring poor sailors home.

The belfry rocks as the bells ring, the
chimes are merry as a song,

They ring home wandering sailors who
have been homeless long.

THE WORD

MY friend, my bonny friend, when we are
old,

And hand in hand go tottering down the
hill,

May we be rich in love's refinèd gold,

May love's gold coin be current with us
still.

May love be sweeter for the vanished
days,

And your most perfect beauty still as
dear

As when your troubled singer stood at
gaze

In the dear March of a most sacred
year.

May what we are be all we might have
been,

And that potential, perfect, O my friend,
And may there still be many sheafs to
glean

In our love's acre, comrade, till the end.

And may we find, when ended is the page,
Death but a tavern on our pilgrimage.

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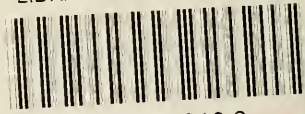
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